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# The Contradictions of International Development Cooperation

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# Abstract

Il mondo moderno è un mondo globalizzato, un mondo frutto di un progresso tecnologico che ha creato sistemi di trasporto e di comunicazione sempre più efficaci permettendo un costante spostamento di persone, di beni e di conoscenze.

Il processo di globalizzazione ha contribuito a creare ciò che noi chiamiamo il “mondo occidentale”: un insieme di Stati che, nonostante le proprie specificità culturali, condividono delle sovrastrutture sociali comuni come gli ordinamenti politici, i programmi economici o le linee di comportamento nelle relazioni tra stati.

Il concetto di “civiltà occidentale”, come viene da qualcuno definita, non ha un’attinenza prettamente geografica: al suo interno vengono inclusi anche paesi come il Giappone o l’Australia. L’Occidente è dunque fondamentalmente inteso come l’insieme dei paesi sviluppati e industrializzati o, semplicemente, dei paesi ricchi.

Tuttavia, il fenomeno della globalizzazione ha messo in evidenza la profonda disparità di benessere nelle diverse regioni del mondo. Nonostante i progressi sociali e tecnologici, il mondo moderno è un mondo nettamente diviso tra nazioni ricche e povere, forse ancor più che in passato.

Le grandi disparità economiche sono palesi soprattutto nel continente africano, ma anche in molti paesi del Sud America o dell’Asia. La povertà, la fame, la guerra e molti altri orrori che ormai sono solo un ricordo lontano nei paesi occidentali, sono invece drammaticamente attuali nel resto del mondo e colpiscono quotidianamente centinaia di milioni di persone.

Per far fronte a queste diseguaglianze si è sviluppato il concetto di cooperazione internazionale allo sviluppo che è una delle tematiche più dibattute nel mondo moderno ed è spesso criticata per la sua presunta inefficacia.

L'obiettivo di questa tesi è analizzare l'impatto che decenni di cooperazione internazionale hanno, ed hanno avuto, sulle numerose regioni beneficiarie. Considerando le cifre astronomiche dei flussi economici destinati agli aiuti internazionali e constatando come le situazioni nei paesi riceventi siano sempre tragiche, è difficile non domandarsi come sia possibile una tale inefficienza.

Nonostante gli sforzi compiuti, gli infiniti progetti di cooperazione e la quantità astronomica di miliardi dollari spesi in svariate forme di aiuto, il risultato è quantomeno deludente. Pur con qualche miglioramento generale, molte aree del mondo sono rimaste povere e sottosviluppate rispetto ai paesi occidentali, in particolare nella regione dell'Africa subsahariana dove le condizioni sono rimaste particolarmente drammatiche e sono presenti circa 400 milioni di persone che vivono sotto la soglia di povertà.

Nel tentativo di comprendere, almeno in parte, i motivi di questa impotenza nel cambiare lo stato delle cose, questo studio prova ad analizzare gli attori fondamentali e le dinamiche principali della cooperazione internazionale.

La cooperazione internazionale allo sviluppo prevede due o più soggetti internazionali che collaborino con l'obiettivo di migliorare le condizioni economiche e sociali di un determinato paese o regione. La politica di cooperazione allo sviluppo (PCS) è l'insieme di politiche attuate da un governo o da un'istituzione multilaterale.

I soggetti principali della cooperazione sono tre: gli stati, le istituzioni internazionali e le organizzazioni non governative (ONG).

A partire dal 1961 le politiche di aiuto internazionale degli stati occidentali sono gestite dall'Organizzazione per la cooperazione e lo sviluppo economico (OCSE), un organo internazionale il cui compito è principalmente il coordinamento delle PCS degli stati membri.

Al vertice del sistema OCSE è il Comitato per l'aiuto allo sviluppo (DAC), ovvero l'insieme dei "grandi donatori": 28 paesi che da soli rappresentano il 95% di tutti i flussi di aiuti pubblici allo sviluppo (APS). Il compito del Comitato è di fungere da luogo di confronto tra i grandi donatori, di armonizzare le politiche di aiuti e di valutare vicendevolmente l'operato dei paesi membri.

Nel triennio 2013 – 2015 il flusso di aiuti dai membri del DAC a paesi terzi è stato di circa 250 miliardi di dollari, di questi quasi 80 provengono dagli Stati Uniti.

Un'altra realtà importante, e forse la più criticata, della cooperazione allo sviluppo sono le istituzioni internazionali. Esse includono le grandi istituzioni finanziarie come il Fondo Monetario Internazionale (FMI) e la Banca Mondiale (BM) oltre a istituzioni politiche come l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite (ONU) o la Commissione Europea (CE). Le istituzioni finanziarie sono attori particolarmente attivi nel campo della cooperazione internazionale: il Fondo Monetario e la Banca Mondiale finanziano numerosi progetti di cooperazione oltre a concedere ingenti prestiti ai paesi bisognosi; la politica dei prestiti dell'FMI e della BM è stata pesantemente criticata e accusata di contribuire all'impoverimento dei paesi in via di sviluppo piuttosto che alla loro crescita economica.

Le organizzazioni non governative sono forse le realtà più conosciute del mondo della cooperazione internazionale. Per definizione le ONG sono associazioni private senza fini di lucro che operano per migliorare le condizioni di vita delle popolazioni dei paesi poveri. Di fatto nel corso del 20° secolo il moltiplicarsi delle varie organizzazioni, e dei fondi disponibili, ha creato una vera e propria industria umanitaria. Nonostante la definizione in comune, le ONG sono realtà ben diverse l'una dall'altra a seconda della loro appartenenza geografica, delle linee di comportamento e, soprattutto, dal denaro disponibile.

La cooperazione internazionale moderna nasce a seguito della seconda guerra mondiale. Nel 1944 con gli accordi Bretton Woods vengono fondate l'FMI e la BM con l'obiettivo dichiarato di facilitare la ricostruzione dell'Europa distrutta dalla guerra; nel 1947 viene lanciato il piano Marshall, un programma di aiuti che distribuisce circa 13 miliardi di dollari ai paesi europei permettendone la rinascita economica.

Il successo della ricostruzione europea ha portato alla convinzione che questo processo di riqualificazione economica fosse applicabile in altri paesi. In particolare a partire dagli anni '50 l'attenzione occidentale si sposta sui paesi africani, i quali cominciano a ricevere finanziamenti e aiuti allo sviluppo.

La decisione occidentale di aiutare i paesi poveri va letta anche in chiave politica e considerando il particolare momento storico. Era in corso un radicale processo di



decolonizzazione, molti stati africani stavano ottenendo l'indipendenza dai paesi europei (in particolare da Inghilterra e Francia); la volontà degli ex paesi colonizzatori di partecipare allo sviluppo delle ex colonie è letta da molti come un tentativo di mantenere un controllo economico sui territori.

Inoltre, la guerra fredda e il contrasto tra Stati Uniti e Unione Sovietica si traducono in un bilanciamento basato su un sistema di alleanze internazionali. Gli USA e l'URSS trovano nei nuovi stati, da poco indipendenti, terreno fertile per allargare la propria zona di influenza. Le due grandi potenze non esitano a finanziare colpi di stato, dittatori e guerre purché i beneficiari si schierino dalla "giusta parte".

In ogni caso, i tentativi di riqualificazione economica dei paesi poveri si rivelano un fallimento. Tra gli anni '50 e gli anni '90 vengono provate diverse tipologie di aiuto, spesso influenzate dalla dottrina economica più rilevante del momento.

Gli sforzi negli anni '50 e '60 vengono posti sullo sviluppo industriale ma l'assenza delle infrastrutture necessarie e delle competenze locali si rivela un ostacolo insormontabile. Negli anni '70 ci si concentra sulla lotta alla povertà e a progetti che coinvolgano i singoli individui e non più le economie statali; anche in questo caso non si ottengono risultati soddisfacenti a causa delle crisi economiche del decennio, dell'instabilità politica e della mancanza di strutture statali locali forti.

Molti governi dei paesi in via di sviluppo sono costretti a indebitarsi per sopravvivere, creando le basi per la crisi del debito degli anni '80. La possibile insolvenza dei paesi poveri costituisce un problema per tutta l'economia globale e mette a rischio anche gli stati occidentali. Per far fronte al problema vengono creati dei piani di aggiustamento strutturale attraverso i quali le istituzioni internazionali garantiscono prestiti ed aiuti ai paesi in difficoltà, in cambio quest'ultimi devono attenersi alle linee di comportamento politiche ed economiche proposte.

I piani di aggiustamento non sortiscono l'effetto previsto e, anzi, diventano bersagli di feroci critiche da parte di coloro che li interpretano come una forma di controllo imperialista, una forma di ingerenza che non rispetta la sovranità dei paesi.

Gli anni '90 registrano una maggior consapevolezza riguardo la necessità di aumentare la comunicazione con le istituzioni locali nei paesi aiutati. Si intraprende un percorso di maggior dialogo tra donatori e beneficiari con l'obiettivo di comprendere al meglio le necessità reciproche; in quest'ottica le ONG cominciano ad essere sfruttate di più: grazie alla loro esperienza sul campo sono spesso ritenute i soggetti più efficaci da utilizzare come mediatori.

Nonostante le nuove strategie proposte durante la prima parte degli anni '90, i finanziamenti e le donazioni diminuiscono nettamente: decenni di fallimenti avevano fiaccato la propositività dei donatori e la caduta dell'URSS ridotto l'utilità politica degli aiuti.

La tesi analizza l'attitudine occidentale, in particolare statunitense, ad approfittare del particolare contesto storico e della generale popolarità delle ONG per creare un profondo legame tra le attività militari e le azioni umanitarie; a partire dalle guerre Jugoslave (1991 – 2001) e, in maggior misura, con le successive campagne in Afghanistan e Iraq viene sviluppato il concetto di "guerra umanitaria".

La presenza di organizzazioni umanitarie in contesti di guerra è una costante per tutto il 20° secolo; già durante la prima guerra mondiale la Croce Rossa (CR) fornisce assistenza medica ai soldati indipendentemente dal loro schieramento. La volontà della CR, e in seguito delle numerose altre ONG, è di proporre uno spazio terzo, un contesto neutro e depoliticizzato che prestasse soccorso a chi ne ha bisogno.

In seguito alla seconda guerra mondiale l'importanza, il prestigio e le capacità economiche delle ONG crescono esponenzialmente. Le organizzazioni umanitarie intervengono in numerose crisi e, col tempo, diventano degli attori politici in grado di influenzare le scelte e i programmi di intere nazioni. Allo stesso tempo le capacità gestionali delle ONG sono spesso adoperate dai governi dei paesi in via di sviluppo delegando loro l'amministrazione di alcuni aspetti del paese; la deresponsabilizzazione delle élite locali pone le basi per le situazioni di assistenzialismo e dipendenza che colpiranno molto paesi poveri.

Le élite politiche e militari occidentali comprendono l'importanza della possibilità, per le organizzazioni non governative, di operare in determinati territori e di influenzare la società locale senza scontrarsi con la volontà della popolazione.

Le attività umanitarie cominciano ad essere organizzate come parte integrante di operazioni militari. Negli Stati Uniti l'USAID, l'ente che coordina le donazioni governative alle ONG, minaccia di tagliare i fondi alle organizzazioni che non allineate alle direttive e alle linee di comportamento del governo americano.

In poco tempo la concezione degli operatori umanitari in contesti di guerre è cambiata agli occhi delle popolazioni locali. Essi vengono ora assimilati alle forze di invasione nemica e pertanto trattati con ostilità. Gli attacchi a strutture gestite da ONG sono nettamente aumentati durante gli anni 2000; gli attacchi hanno spinto gli operatori ad aumentare la propria sicurezza attraverso l'utilizzo di guardie armate o, come nel caso della Croce Rossa Italiana, operando direttamente sotto la protezione delle forze armate aumentando ulteriormente la diffidenza dei locali.

I governi occidentali legittimano la guerra umanitaria come una guerra indispensabile per migliorare le condizioni di vita delle popolazioni attaccate. Il conflitto dunque come via necessaria per esportare diritti umani, benessere e democrazia; e, secondo molti studiosi e analisti, per imporre le proprie economie di mercato e governi malleabili.

Attraverso il caso di studio dell'Afghanistan la tesi vuole evidenziare l'impatto che 15 anni di occupazione NATO e di aiuti umanitari hanno sul paese. Nonostante gli anni trascorsi e le decine di miliardi di dollari spesi, le condizioni di vita delle popolazioni locali non presentano miglioramenti.

Lo studio sottolinea l'enorme spreco di denaro proveniente dai finanziamenti umanitari; molti fondi vengono utilizzati per permettere ad operatori, diplomatici e giornalisti occidentali di mantenere uno stile di vita agiato e sicuro, sicurezza che è affidata ad eserciti di mercenari privati, altro fenomeno finanziato dagli aiuti. Infine, a causa dello scarso controllo, molti finanziamenti destinati allo sviluppo di progetti in aree remote terminano nelle mani di guerriglieri o gruppi criminali locali.

Il finanziamento della criminalità locale attraverso gli aiuti è una problematica presente in molti contesti. È il caso della Bosnia, paese duramente colpito dalle guerre Jugoslave e che dal 1995 è stato beneficiario di ingenti aiuti umanitari. Le grosse ONG hanno finanziato grossi

progetti umanitari delegando i lavori alle piccole organizzazioni locali, favorendo la nascita di un'infinità di piccole associazioni nate solo con l'intento di ottenere del denaro.

Inoltre la presenza di aiuti umanitari ha avuto un impatto negativo anche sul tessuto sociale. Le ONG in Bosnia sono sostituite all'assistenza sociale poiché l'occidente decise, volontariamente, che le istituzioni statali di welfare non sarebbero state aiutate. Questa procedura ha causato il deterioramento delle istituzioni di assistenza sociale locali; dopo che, a guerra finita, le organizzazioni internazionali hanno lasciato la Bosnia il paese si è ritrovato senza alcun tipo di welfare funzionante.

Ancora una volta la mancanza di controllo che vige nel mondo della cooperazione internazionale è evidente. La facilità con cui grosse somme di denaro spariscono è impressionante; ancor più sconvolgente è l'apparente mancanza di consapevolezza, o di interesse, da parte di chi dovrebbe vigilare su queste dinamiche.

Gli organi adibiti al controllo dei flussi economici nel mondo della cooperazione internazionale dovrebbero, in teoria, essere le grandi istituzioni internazionali finanziarie, il Fondo Monetario e la Banca Mondiale. Nella pratica questi due organismi sono stati spesso criticati per una mancanza di previdenza e per un profondo distacco dalle situazioni "reali".

L'avversione dell'opinione pubblica, soprattutto occidentale, verso i piani di aggiustamento strutturale sfociano in accese campagne per l'annullamento del debito. Nel 1996 l'FMI inaugura il progetto "nazioni povere pesantemente indebitate" (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries HIPC) con lo scopo di regolamentare la situazione economica dei paesi indebitati anche attraverso la cancellazione, totale o parziale, del debito contratto.

L'iniziativa, inizialmente accolta con approvazione, ha presto messo in luce i propri limiti e le proprie contraddizioni.

I criteri di selezione nel decidere quali paesi fossero meritevoli di tagli al debito si sono rivelati incoerenti. La cancellazione del debito viene concessa ai paesi più profondamente indebitati e che ottengono prestiti strutturali oltre la media; i paesi mediamente indebitati o con una situazione economica in miglioramento sono invece tenuti a ripagare i prestiti.

Secondo molti studiosi questa decisione va a discapito dei paesi, pur sempre indebitati, che hanno dimostrato la volontà e la capacità di attuare un miglioramento delle proprie politiche economiche; inoltre la consapevolezza che oltre un certo livello di indebitamento i paesi possano avere la relativa certezza che questo sarà annullato crea una mancanza di stimoli al miglioramento economico e una generale predisposizione alla dipendenza dagli aiuti internazionali.

La tesi propone una relazione ancor più drammatica tra i programmi del Fondo e i paesi in via di sviluppo: la correlazione tra i prestiti dell'FMI e gli stati falliti. Il fallimento di uno stato, inteso in senso geopolitico, non è limitato al fallimento finanziario dovuto all'insolvenza; con stato fallito si vuole intendere una situazione estrema in cui viene a mancare una identità politica in grado di rivendicare l'uso legittimo della forza e l'autorità nel far rispettare le leggi.

Viene tracciato un parallelismo tra gli otto paesi convenzionalmente riconosciuti come "stati falliti" e il tempo da essi percorso all'interno di programmi strutturali dell'FMI. Ad eccezione di un caso, tutti i paesi presentano una percentuale estremamente elevata di tempo trascorso nei programmi FMI negli anni precedenti al fallimento.

La teoria suggerita è che i cambiamenti strutturali richiesti dal Fondo fossero troppo drastici per le fragili situazioni degli stati riceventi; la mancanza di infrastrutture adeguate e di personale formato non ha permesso un utilizzo efficace dei grandi flussi di denaro immessi nel paese tramite i prestiti. Al contrario, essi hanno minato un sistema già fragile, economicamente e socialmente. L'introduzione incontrollata di risorse e l'imposizione di modelli politici "estranei" hanno alimentato i conflitti interni già esistenti, sfociati poi in guerre civili.

Ovviamente non è possibile affermare che situazioni estreme come il fallimento di uno stato siano unicamente imputabili alle ingerenze occidentali sotto forma di aiuti.

Potrebbe essere vera la considerazione contraria ovvero che questi stati erano così bisognosi di aiuti proprio perché la situazione interna era ormai irrisolvibile; ciò implicherebbe che il destino di questi paesi era inevitabile, indipendentemente dall'intervento occidentale.

Anche questa interpretazione fa però riflettere sull'efficacia degli aiuti e dei programmi di aggiustamento strutturale i quali, nonostante i decenni a disposizione e gli investimenti fatti, non sono stati in grado di evitare un epilogo così drammatico ai paesi aiutati. Entrambe le conclusioni suggeriscono che è necessario riflettere sull'utilità effettiva degli aiuti internazionali e dei prestiti in particolare.

Per rimarcare queste considerazioni è proposto un altro confronto: quello tra gli stati con il miglior incremento del reddito pro capite nel periodo 1982 – 2002 e gli stati con il peggior incremento nello stesso periodo. I dieci paesi con il peggior sviluppo economico, in netta recessione, hanno tutti passato una considerevole quantità di tempo all'interno dei programmi FMI nel ventennio in questione, inoltre essi presentano un rapporto tra aiuti e prodotto interno lordo piuttosto significativo.

Al contrario i dieci paesi con il miglior incremento del reddito hanno ricevuto aiuti e prestiti in quantità minima, in alcuni casi nulla. Alcuni di questi paesi partivano da situazioni economiche estremamente complicate: è il caso dell'India, della Thailandia, della Malesia o delle Mauritius.

Anche in questo caso sarebbe scorretto concludere che i prestiti e gli aiuti sono la causa di ogni problema economico e che in loro assenza ogni paese possa prosperare. Tuttavia è importante considerare che lo sviluppo economico è possibile anche senza gli aiuti o la guida occidentale.

Una differenza sostanziale tra i due modelli di sviluppo è che i paesi "non aiutati" hanno avuto la possibilità di coltivare un'economia basata sulle proprie specificità e non imposta da istituzioni straniere, questo ha permesso ai processi economici di svilupparsi in contemporanea alle infrastrutture e alla popolazione in maniera relativamente armoniosa.

È comunque doveroso distinguere tra le statistiche e le condizioni di vita reali: un incremento del PIL o del reddito pro capite non implica automaticamente una migliore qualità della vita.

Il caso dell'India è esplicativo: una nazione dal buono sviluppo economico e con un incremento costante degli indicatori di prosperità. Tuttavia è anche uno dei paesi con il più alto numero di morti per fame del mondo. Fame dovuta non a carestie o alla mancanza

effettiva del cibo, ma al limitato accesso ai generi alimentari che affligge buona parte della popolazione. La produzione alimentare indiana è in buona parte destinata alla vendita sui mercati esteri, spesso in quegli stessi paesi da cui partono azioni umanitarie per aiutare a sfamare la popolazione dell'India.

Questo è solo uno dei numerosi casi di contraddizioni, a volte assurde spesso tragiche, riscontrabili all'interno della cooperazione internazionale allo sviluppo. Contraddizioni e problematiche che fin dalla nascita del concetto di aiuti internazionali hanno prodotto numerose critiche e accesi dibattiti.

Argomenti come l'ingerenza politica occidentale, la dipendenza dagli aiuti, la distruzione dei tessuti sociali e delle economie locali sono solo alcuni dei numerosi argomenti sollevati da un dibattito ormai decennale. Numerosi autori, accademici e politici hanno proposto il proprio punto di vista sull'ormai appurata inefficienza della cooperazione internazionale allo sviluppo.

È doveroso sottolineare come il fallimento della cooperazione non possa essere imputato unicamente agli sbagli programmatici delle istituzioni donatrici. Come rimarcato da numerosi studiosi un miglioramento dell'efficacia del mondo umanitario non può avvenire finché i paesi in via di sviluppo, in primis quelli africani, non acquisteranno consapevolezza delle proprie responsabilità.

# Introduction

In the contemporary political, social and cultural context, terms such as humanitarian aid and international cooperation are of common use. They represent concepts of justice, ethics and they are represented through actions aimed to improve the living conditions of others.

In the Western world, it is rare to find an individual who has never participated in the development cooperation process, even through small donations or occasional volunteering activities. The world of aid is a reality that has increased dramatically over the decades and has created hundreds of different ramifications: small donations, large-scale millionaire projects, economic programs of international institutions, remote adoption processes and numerous other.

All these types of cooperation start from a single fundamental concept: to help those ones who need it.

It is certainly a noble goal and, through decades of aid of all kinds, it has allowed to improve the living conditions of millions of people by bringing food, water, protection, tools and infrastructures to entire populations in every remote corner of the planet.

However, the world of international development cooperation is far from being a perfect reality: personal interests, little foresight and corruption are elements deeply rooted in the world of aid. This fact is quite obvious considering the huge amount of money involved in international cooperation; what is less obvious is that over the years very little has been done to solve some certain critical issues.

The aim of this study is to analyze the "other face" of international cooperation. In particular, the impact that international aid has, and has had, in certain regions of the world.

During my personal experience in the world of aid, first as a volunteer and later as a collaborator, I have come into contact with some of the contradictions of cooperation and often fail to understand them.



My decision to deepen these dynamics, was favored by a meeting with Professor Marco Deriu of the University of Parma, who gave me some bibliographic insights. This research base has been expanded by finding additional volumes and proceeding to a comparison work. The analyzed publications often contained old or insufficient data, so more data was required through the many statistical websites; in particular the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) site was widely used.

The first chapter of this thesis is dedicated to some personal experiences or considerations. The study of certain areas has allowed me to be more objective in interpreting some of the issues i faced during my experiences in Africa. In particular, I have analyzed a situation of illegal abduction of aid in Ethiopia.

The second chapter presents the key actors and the main dynamics of development co-operation. The evolution and the different roles of the three groups of protagonists in the aid world are analyzed; states, major international institutions and non-governmental organizations. Each of these subjects has its own specifics, aims and lines of behavior; often, these international actors collaborate with each other for a common goal, but, equally often, they come into conflict because of their structural diversity.

The third chapter deepens the most complex, and the most well-known, of the protagonists of international co-operation: non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They were officially born at the end of the nineteenth century but especially after the Second World War they exponentially increased their importance and their roles in almost all humanitarian crises, and along with their popularity they increased their political, social and economic relevance.

The fourth chapter deals with the birth and development of "humanitarian wars". This term, now commonly used, was born during the '90s and it effectively summarizes the deep bond between military operations and humanitarian intervention. At the basis of this relation there is the need of Western powers to have "ethical" motivation to get into war.

This bond, complex and irregular, has involved numerous internal debates in the world of cooperation as well as numerous criticisms by those ones who consider NGOs as an integral part of a new Western imperialism.

The fifth chapter deals with the effects of international cooperation on the development of the beneficiary countries. In particular, long-term economic impact is taken into account. An analysis is made of the link, highlighted by some scholars, among the loans of major international institutions and cases of bankruptcy of a state. It also examines the effects of colonialism on developing countries and the internal debate on repayment requests to Western countries.

In this chapter three case studies are presented, they are based on the research of three different authors in Afghanistan, Sudan and Bosnia.

The sixth chapter links together the views of different authors about the effectiveness of international cooperation. The debate has different types of authors that propose different conclusions. In addition, depending on the author's background (political, academic, journalistic) the arguments are focused on specific aspects which may be political rather than social or cultural.

Particular attention has been paid to the impact that international aid has on local economies and social relations.

# I Chapter

## Considerations On International Development Cooperation

### 1.1 The wells of Gogti

In the summer of 2012 I went to Ethiopia for a research period to write a thesis about the status of the Ethiopian primary school. At the same time, along with a colleague, I was commissioned to verify the state of maintenance of numerous humanitarian projects funded by a Brescia onlus during the previous eight years. Over the course of two months in the field, research and project inspection have allowed us to visit many regions of the country, usually as guests of local NGOs or Christian missions.

Many projects to visit were in the Jijica area, in Eastern Ethiopia, among which the most isolated were water wells built in 2005 in the Gogti desert, an a remote area bordering Somalia. The eight wells in question had been built with the aim of providing drinking water to the many small villages inhabiting the area. Previously the villages had to use the water of a river, often dry, or buy supplies to the Somali black market.

In our verification visit, we have been able to address, in a small scale, with some of the major contradictions and problems that afflict the world of international cooperation at every levels.

The "Gogti region wells" project, which cost around 50,000 euros, was funded by Brescia onlus in collaboration with the International Voluntary Service (VIS) a no-profit organization managed by the order of the Salesians who had a priest in the area, responsible for monitoring the projects.

After the death of the operator in 2006, the responsibility of the project was entrusted to the Hararghe Catholic Secretariat (HCS), a large local organization under the responsibility of the bishop of Harar.

HCS, that runs numerous projects across Eastern Ethiopia with its large team of engineers, in that period turned out to be ready to "inherit" the responsibilities of the projects in Gogti and, of course, received funding for the necessary maintenance.

Our first step was to ask one of these engineers to report on the projects in more rural areas; but he explained to us how the Gogti area was considered too difficult to visit due to its distance, track conditions and its proximity to the Somali border. The projects were in a Muslim-majority region and Christian operatives feared the aggression of local people.

So, despite the funding received, none of the HCS had seen the wells since their inauguration, seven years earlier., They informed us they had delegated control and part of the funding, to a small local entrepreneur, Mr. Fuad, who had initially worked on the construction of wells. Harar's organization therefore diverted a large part of the maintenance funds to a third person who insured that the conditions of the wells were monitored.

We decided to check the wells in person and we managed to convince an HCS engineer to accompany us. After getting acquainted about our inspection visit, Fuad decided to join us, even with his own transport.

Upon our arrival, what we found was desolating, three of the eight initial wells had been completely destroyed by a flood, the rest were in extremely precarious condition. The pumps of all the wells were inoperable making it impossible the access to the water. The villagers had been forced to break the concrete base of the wells to access the water in the old way by lifting water containers with a rope.

Along with practical inconvenience, it was a particularly hygienic problem: an open water source implies stagnant water, swarming with insects, especially mosquitoes, which increase the risk of malarial contagion. It is also a good habitat for snakes or small animals that can contaminate water by their dropping and corpses.



Picture 1



Picture 2

The picture (1) prove the use of the Gogt Wells in 2012. The picture (2) shows one of the well completely destroyed by a disastrous flood which has considerably lowered the ground level.

Asked about this situation, Fuad defended himself by explaining that it was useless to spend on maintenance because the villagers did not have the patience to wait the repairing; they also were more satisfied because they felt they had access to the water even more directly. According to Fuad, the locals did not understand the difference between clean and corrupt water and consequently did not care much about the status of the pumps as long as the water was accessible.

Fuad's "defense" was surely true because, the lack of awareness of the hygiene rules and the lack of knowledge, on the part of the premises, was real. In hindsight we realized that together with the construction of wells we should have educated the locals on why keeping the water clean was so important.

This is a very common problem in international co-operation: through the aid they provide the means (technology, money, infrastructure), but they rarely go through a training course on how to optimize the use of certain tools.

However, Fuad's position, albeit with a background of truth, concealed a much worse behavior. After he began receiving the first funding for the maintenance of the wells he realized that it could be a profitable deal. He had founded his own small NGO who took care of bringing water to populations in need through water tankers. The drought that had hit the Somali region<sup>1</sup> and many refugee camps in the area were the best conditions to strengthen i his water business.

Thus, the presence of the wells was not only useless but even damaging to him and obviously he had no motivation to make sure they continued to work effectively: the waterless villages were all potential customers.

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<sup>1</sup> It is understood as a geographical area covering the Ethiopian Somali Region and Western Somalia.

Through his NGO, which would be more appropriate to consider an enterprise, he received funding and funds, including the indirect ones from Brescia onlus, and used them for the purchase of water tankers and water transport.

Water that he did not distribute for free but, actually, he sold it. Sometimes he sold water to Western workers running the refugee camps who were unaware that the water was involuntarily funded by other humanitarian organizations.

We discovered this in the following weeks through conversations with the bishop of Harar, head of the HCS, and his associates. Funding from Italy was obviously canceled, Fuad became unavailable and it was no longer possible to contact him. The latest news we had about him in 2015: he was financing his cousin's campaign as Jijica mayor.

Obviously the amount of funding for the construction and maintenance of the Gogti wells is nothing compared to the total global humanitarian funding, less than one drop in the sea.

Nevertheless, this small example offers many of the issues that affect international cooperation at every level.

It is ridiculous to limit the proposed example to an isolated attempt of fraud by an avid operator. On the contrary, it is a result of a general lack of coordination, communication and poor control.

The non-profit organization of Brescia, partly because of its logistical limitations, had been wrong not to be interested for years about practical project success; they had only sent periodically maintenance funds, believing that local organizations would have best managed the money they had received. In addition, as mentioned above, they had been interested only in the construction of wells without in any way "training" the beneficiaries on the importance of maintenance.

The HCS wrongly took responsibility for projects that it did not want to monitor seriously, confirming the general rule of the humanitarian world (in particular small local NGOs) that the priority is to get every possible funding, the practical side is considered only later. In addition, it was wrong to delegate maintenance and funding to an unreliable person without checking how he was doing his job.

It is due to this lack of control that men such as Fuad can find in the world of humanitarian aid a great business with which to enrich themselves, legally or not.

All these issues, apparently easily resolved, are the routine in the world of international cooperation. As it will be shown in this study, we can easily exchange the onus with a large international institution (UN, WB, IMF), HCS with any international NGOs and the small Fuad company with a local NGO in a poor country. In these contexts, obviously the values change, and instead of a few tens of thousands of euros the flows, and the losses, are hundreds of millions, sometimes billions.

## 1.2 International Development Cooperation

The aim of this thesis is to reflect on the many contradictions and criticalities of the world of international development cooperation. By definition, international collaboration is a process of collaboration between two or more international actors together to achieve a common goal. There are various types of cooperation: commercial, military, scientific, cultural, private or state.

International development cooperation involves two or more international actors working to improve the economic or social situation of a particular area. This process of development can take place through various forms, most notably humanitarian aid, funding for specific projects and long-term loans.

During my research, I have been able to see how often the concept of cooperation as a collaboration between two subjects has been lost in the world of humanitarian aid. In many cases, development processes are becoming unilateral: lenders are performing their task simply by deploying money and, in some cases, imposing their own will about how the funds should be spent; likewise the beneficiaries always indiscriminately accept any kind of aid without proposing plans or projects.



In other words, there is no an active and productive dialogue between the parties involved, there is no a communion of intent which can create a balanced relationship between donors and beneficiaries.

People involved in the cooperation should avoid the common naivety that helping others is a simple or trivial process, a process that adapts to one's good intentions. The big risk is to put oneself in an attitude of superiority, involuntarily or not, convinced that with our good will we will solve the problems of others.

Too often donors, or lenders, do not take into account for the complexities and intrinsic difficulties of the situations in which they intervene. They forget that often they are not able to define the contexts in which they move.

Especially in cases of countries with profoundly different cultures, we need to be aware of the general organic design: social relationships, ethnic conflicts, kinship structures, or specific traditions. We need to have a "map" of the place where we are in; otherwise the risk is to move within unknown dynamics, even if not perceived, with the potential to ruin existing balances.

The important commitment of solidarity does not justify ignorance: intervening to help in case of conflict or difficult situations can worsen the situation if the interventions are not done with intelligence and awareness.

Fundamental to co-operation would be to understand how to operate before going blind in campaigns and projects, sometimes it is necessary to step back and reflect on our judgment and analysis skills. The solidarity action must lay the foundations of a reflective thinking and not impulsive. It is important to understand that social action implies unforeseen consequences: theoretical programming and the real consequences are two different things, and sometimes, despite good intentions, the outcomes endings are counterproductive.

As it will be analyzed in this thesis, the international development cooperation, especially the humanitarian world, has always been the subject of many debates. It is a problem that has touched every field from political to social through the economic one.

The aid dispute has arisen with the help itself since the birth of the first great international organization: the Red Cross. Henry Dunant 's intentions were to help the wounded by maintaining their neutrality and working independently of any army or nation. The stated goal was to create a third space, a neutral comparison site. RC's neutrality was recognized and formalized through numerous conventions.

However, since the delivery of the first Nobel Peace Prize (1901) to Henry Dunant, some European pacifists have criticized the existence of an organ such as RC. In their opinion, it facilitated war activities and was potentially exploitable by the military system.

Other controversy emerged during World War II, which concerned the excessive neutrality of the Red Cross. The international organization was allowed to operate in the German concentration camps between 1942 and 1943, in return the German government required absolute silence on the horrors occurring within the camps. After an internal debate, Red Cross operators decided to keep silence and not to denounce Nazi crimes. This choice was justified by RC explaining that denouncing the Germans would have implicated the abandonment of the camp prisoners at their fate without any assistance.

The choice, in line with the RC's statute, attracted many criticisms in the years after the war, in some cases they were accused of aiding and complicating with the Nazis.

A similar debate came up with Guantánamo's case. The US prison camp on Cuban territory has been subject to various international controversy about the conditions under which prisoners were subjected. The Red Cross started the visits to the camp in 2002 but, by Florian Westphal's spokesman's words, they stated that they were not going to publicize the results of their inspections fearing the creation of a political debate which could have prevented operators from accessing the prison.

However, after a year of internal debate the RC decided to report serious violations of the American jail, focusing mainly on the psychological violence suffered by the prisoners. The debates that followed were much access and American behavior was severely criticized.

However, the allegations were few and far-reaching and limited to affecting a few single US soldiers rather than the military and political elites that cleverly took away all responsibilities.

The RC case is not an isolated case, all the history of humanitarian intervention is linked to great ethical doubts, ambivalence and with deep internal contradictions.

The birth of Médecins sans frontières, another of the largest international NGOs, took place in open controversy with the Red Cross; former RC operators did not endorse the role of neutrality and they required a more active role, political recognition, and complete independence from state control.

In some cases, the rising political awareness of NGOs has led to conflicts between host organizations and governments. In some conflicts of recent decades, like in Somalia, Bosnia or Rwanda, many humanitarian agencies complained that it was not possible for them to work as they would have liked and they were not doing what they had come for.

This is especially the case where a government wants to have operational control over the activities of NGOs, imposing behavior lines or claiming some of the funding.

In the most extreme cases some organizations decide to abandon the country and its projects, for example MSF in Rwanda. The organization denounced that their intervention had been used for political purposes contrary to the ethics of the association and that they had lost the sense of their work in a too complex contexts.

Undue appropriation of funding is another major problem of international cooperation. But in general, all resource use is a complicated problem.

Both in the case of humanitarian aid or loans from international institutions, resource management is in question. The common idea is that funds and their use "belong" only to those who mobilize them. However, it is, again, contrary to the concept of cooperation as a collaboration between several subjects. To propose appropriate use of resources is crucial to not lose them but, to do this, it is necessary to know perfectly the context in which the funds will be sent and make sure that the will of the recipient is the same of the donor.

Usually aid action is only conceived in terms of "sufficient" or "insufficient" funds: the perpetual belief that with the right amount of money a certain difficulty can be resolved. However, it would be more appropriate to think in terms of "effective" or "ineffective" or, even better, "opportune" or "inopportune" aid.

As explained in this thesis by authors such as Amartya Sen sometimes the aid is too many and distributed in the wrong way and in these cases the presence of aid can become a damage rather than an improvement. Food aid in particular is among the most controversial, the steady flow of food to poor countries helps to worsen the local economy, putting the already fragile indigenous productions into crisis.

To be sure that the aid is appropriate, the various international organizations and institutions have to broaden their field of observation and understand that, even if in a strong position, they are part of a much wider global context that can not be understood unless they accept to know their interlocutor.

Over the years, the humanitarian industry have reached a very high technical level; however, a project can be certainly efficient but if it is imposed or granted without the cooperation of the beneficiaries does not matter how apparently perfect and ideal is it: it does not create lasting ties and does not imply a real social development.

It is necessary to abandon the paternalistic conception of the donor-beneficiary relationship and learn to create shared goals and meanings that allow a process of mutual development.

### **1.3 Humanitarian Campaigns**

In order to fund their projects, large NGOs have developed marketing processes to attract private donations. Since the Biafra crisis and the emergence of the humanitarian emergency concept, NGOs communication strategies have decided to target advertising campaigns of great emotional impact.

During the writing of this thesis I have seen many advertising images used by NGOs over the decades, especially in the 1990s and 2000s, and I believe that the repeated ways of these images have contributed to increasing the perception of cooperation as a unilateral relationship.

The vast majority of NGO-selected images are pesky and gruesome situations. The obvious will of the organizations is rightly to touch the consciences and provide a profound emotional impact. However, the fact of constantly proposing a particular type of situation has the effect of banalizing it; after thousands of images of the same type for years and years the shocking effect is lost and people begin to think that certain things are "normal" in specific areas of the world.

The scheme proposed by the aid-seeking campaigns is always a "we-them" relationship: attention is given to the role of the single private western and in what he could do for saving "them", "them" in this case has a particular meaning: an indefinite number of people in difficulty without a definite identity.



In the proposed representations the protagonists are always children or, alternatively, children and mothers; it is very rare for adult males to be represented. It is a way to exploit the strong empathy that everyone has towards children in distress. However, it is an extremely limiting representation: no situations of social ties or relationships (except mother-son) are ever shown. and in any case the relationships are insignificant compared to the contribution it can make by the donor.



Also, the geographical context is often not considered; the vast majority of humanitarian aid flows to large African, Asian or South American cities, but the images proposed to Western donors are always remote villages, desert situations and rural contexts where, in reality, a small part of the aid is spent precisely because most of the poor people live in peripheral areas of large cities.

In this way, they contribute to creating, and increasing, a degraded imagination to which Africa or, in general, developing countries are automatically associated.

This geographic imagination goes back to a conception of the inhabitants of poor regions as "different" people and needy for our help in survival.

Thus, the donor lacks a real referent and all attention is only shifted to his membership to the Western world, to the rich world, creating a very strong identification with the economic power which becomes almost an identity factor.



None of these campaigns asks donors to expand their knowledge, to deepen their topics, or to experience experiences with different humanities. On the contrary, all that is required to the donors is to collaborate economically, relying on experienced operators which will do the right thing and in return the donor will have a clean conscience in front of some particularly strong images.

The horror that is proposed to individuals is not intended to involve, educate, or change something. The implied goal is to create anxiety and a sense of guilt, that can easily be removed with little donations.

It is therefore not important if these messages are depoliticized. They are not informing about the situation, they do not say why a particular country is in war, they do not explain if a population is starving because of famine or because of a lack of access to food (very different situations). They merely expose the most upsetting and media part of a problem, which does not matter much.

I am aware that this phenomenon is, in fact, publicity. It serves to make money as it is normal, and it is therefore logical to use the most practical and effective methodology to reach the goal.

However, I believe that this process, which is slowly changing over the last 2-3, years, has contributed to creating a vision of the not-Western world as a devastated world, a miserable and hopeless context. The constant representation of a category of people as profoundly diverse and pathologically in need implies an imaginary full of misconceptions and misconceptions when confronting the members of these two worlds.



## II Chapter

# The Dynamics Of Development Cooperation

### 2.1 The Actors Of Development Policies

Development cooperation policy is the set of policies implemented by a government or a multilateral institution aimed at fostering the necessary conditions for the economic and social development of another country. These policies can be implemented by governmental, national or international organizations or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

One of the key points in development policies is the transfer of resources from rich countries to the neediest countries, this process is called Official Development Assistance (ODA). The ODA was created by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) an organ for co-ordinating major donor countries<sup>2</sup>.

Many of the institutions and programs that form the current view of development cooperation have been created in the years following the Second World War. In particular, the Bank for Reconstruction and Development (part of the World Bank group), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) responsible for managing the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe. The OEEC was transformed into the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1961 by the DAC, the forum for the main donor countries to discuss and confront.

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<sup>2</sup> F. Bonaglia, V. de Luca, La cooperazione internazionale allo sviluppo, il Mulino, 2006, pp. 10

All developed countries have their own development cooperation policy. The major donor countries are the 28 of the DAC, which account for 95% of total ODA official flows<sup>3</sup>.

The task of the DAC forum is to harmonize cooperation policies through data research and the production of guidelines for the donors. The work of member countries is periodically evaluated by two other countries (peer review<sup>4</sup>). Through this system they assess whether the DAC recommendations have been applied and they are studying how to further improve the policies of the country concerned.

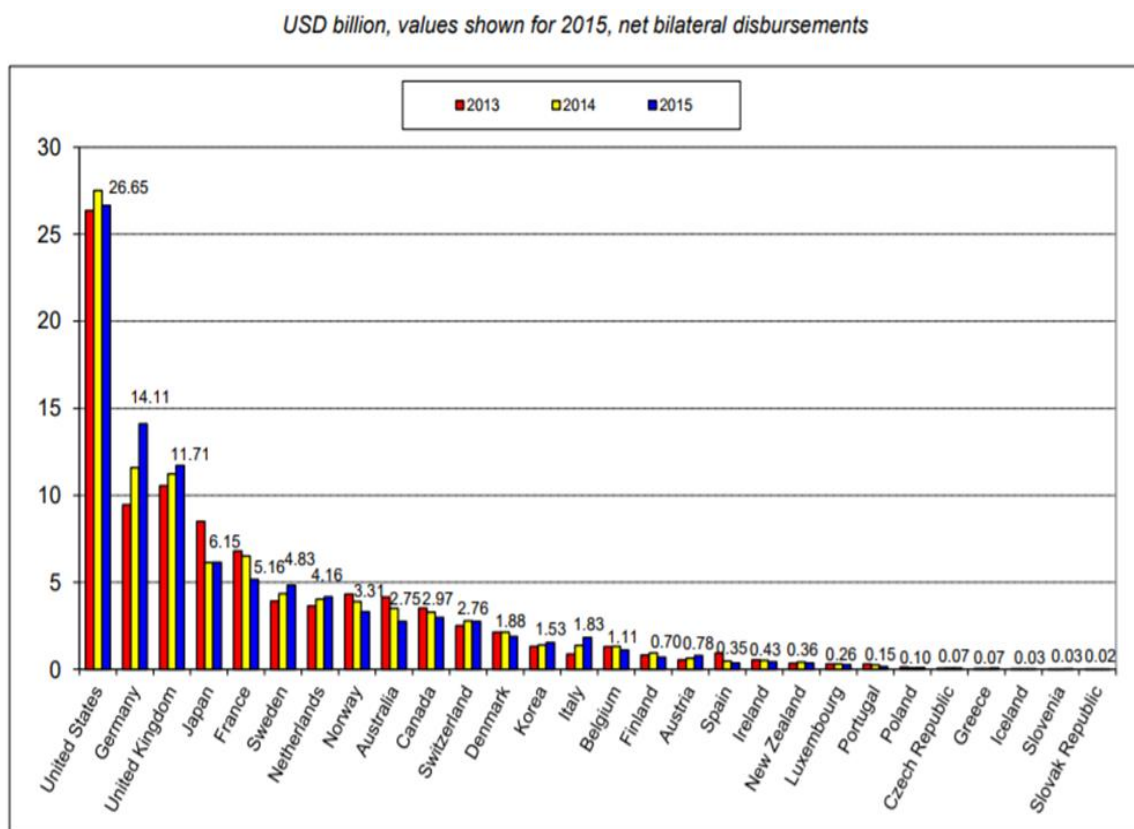


Table 1

<sup>3</sup> Donations from NGOs are not considered as official aids. Also, until 2005, the official ODA aid did not include aid to “more advance” Eastern European developing countries.

Bertrand Badie, Dirk Berg-Schlosser, Leonardo Morlino, International Encyclopedia of Political Science, Sage Pubns, 2001

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/site/peerreview/information-note-on-dac-peer-review-process.htm>

The table (1)<sup>5</sup> shows the investment in billions of dollars of DAC countries between 2013 and 2015. We can notice the marked inequality between the United States and the other Member States.

However, considering Europe as a single economic reality, the level of contribution is similar to that of the United States in the three-year period considered.

Other major players in the world of development cooperation are international institutions. They include the United Nations agencies, the European Commission (EC) and the international financial institutions. Among the international financial institutions, the most important are those ones arising from the Bretton Woods agreements, namely the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). In particular, the World Bank is one of the largest donors through two of its main bodies: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA).

The function of IDA is to provide zero-interest loans to poorer countries which are unable to obtain loans from the market; instead, the IBRD extends the already in place loans to governments in countries with a relatively high per capita income. Another WB agency is the International Finance Corporation (IFC) which operates with the aim of promoting the development of private industry in poor countries through private sector loans and facilitating access to the international credit market.

One of the major agencies of the United Nations is the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which aims to share knowledge and experience and strengthen the capacities of developing countries to contribute to the establishment of democratic governments in the fight against poverty and the prevention and reconstruction of humanitarian crises.

Finally, the role of non-governmental private organizations must be considered, they represent the most complex and varied reality among the actors of international development and often they are the most prominent actors.

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<sup>5</sup> Development Aid at a Glance Statistic by Region, 2017, pp. 4, <http://www.oecd.org>

By a World Bank definition, NGOs are "private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development."<sup>6</sup>

The range of NGOs covers a wide range of activities ranging from humanitarian intervention in crisis areas to the concerning education and awareness of development issues or the promotion of fair and equitable trade.

There is generally a distinction between two types of organizations: the advocacy ones, which promote a particular cause or ideology and operational organizations whose primary purpose is the design and implementation of cooperation projects.

The exact number of NGOs in the world is unknown. The number of organizations operating in developing countries is estimated to be around 40,000 by the United Nations<sup>7</sup>, however, they are much more numerous if we consider all the other ones working in the country of origin. The UN recognized officially 2,236 NGOs of which 131 were large and operating in several countries. The emergence of NGOs has been one of the most significant and complicated changes in the world of cooperation.

The table (2)<sup>8</sup> shows the percentage distribution of foreign investment in poor countries between 1971 and 2001. We can see how Sub-Saharan Africa has lagged behind other developing countries and how it depends on humanitarian aid (ODA) much more than during the 70's. It is also important to consider that "grants from NGOs" includes only private donations rather than funding from countries or institutions.

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<sup>6</sup> Working with NGOs, A Practical Guide to Operational Collaboration between The World Bank and Non-governmental Organizations, Operations Policy Department, World Bank, 1995, pp. 13  
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/814581468739240860/pdf/multi-page.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Howard White, Simon Feeny, An Examination of The Long-Run Trends and Recent Developments in Foreign Aid, Journal of Economic Development, 2003, pp. 116

<http://www.jed.or.kr/full-text/28-1/White.PDF>

<sup>8</sup> T. Addison, G. Mavrotas, Development Finance in the Global Economy: The Road Ahead (Studies in Development Economics and Policy), Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 46

Total Net Disbursements of Total Official and Private Flows by Type,  
1971-2001 (%)

	1971-80	1981-90	1991-2001
<b>All Developing Countries</b>			
Official Development Assistance (ODA)	36.7	50.8	41.3
Other Official Flows (OOF)	8.7	6.6	4.6
Private Flows	50.7	38.2	50.1
Grants from NGOs	3.9	4.4	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.00
<b>Sub-Saharan African Countries</b>			
Official Development Assistance (ODA)	59.5	77.8	88.3
Other Official Flows (OOF)	11.2	14.4	0.2
Private Flows	29.3	7.9	11.5
Grants from NGOs	na	na	na
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Table 2*

DAC countries often finance or entrust projects to NGOs, whose contribution is therefore higher than the one shown in the table since these funds are included in the ODA item. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the contribution of NGOs is much smaller than the perceived one; they are the "face" of international co-operation, but the most of the aid is financed by states and international institutions.

## 2.2 The Evolution Of Development Policies

In July 1944, with the war still underway, representatives of allied powers<sup>9</sup> gathered in the Bretton Woods Conference. The purpose of this conference was to lay the foundations for the new postwar world order.

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<sup>9</sup> For the conference in Bretton Woods (New Hampshire), 730 delegates from 44 Allied countries gathered.

The goal was to rebuild the economy by establishing a new trading system and creating regulations that would avoid repeating the financial crises of the 1930s.

Therefore, it was of fundamental importance that Europe, destroyed by war, regained its role of economic power, and for this purpose it was decided to enter enormous flows of money to help the European recovery.

In the context of the Bretton Woods agreements two institutions were founded, which would become the protagonists of the world economy: the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Originally, the WB had the task of facilitating investment for reconstruction while the IMF had the task of handling the world's financial systems. Thus, they were initially founded for economic reconstruction and only later became important subjects for development policies.

On June 5, 1947, US Secretary of State George Marshall introduced an European Recovery Program (ERP) through a speech at Harvard University that became famous as the "Marshall Plan." It was an aid plan which distributed, between 1948 and 1952, about 13 billion dollars divided into 14 European countries<sup>10</sup>. The Marshall Plan is conventionally considered a success, it let the United States to increase their control and financial power and at the same time it restored the european economic power.

In the late '50s, after the success of the redevelopment of Europe, Western attention moved on poor countries, particularly Africa<sup>11</sup>.

They decided to apply the same procedure in the belief that the key element to give an input to the development was a good initial financial capital. They decided to give to the poor countries an initial investment capital using funds from the WB and the IMF. At that time Africa was experiencing a phase of decolonization, many African states were gaining

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<sup>10</sup> Most of the aid went to Great Britain (24%) France (20%), Italy (11) and Germany (10). However, the least populous countries (Norway, Austria, Greece, Holland) received on average more per capita aid.

<sup>11</sup> F. Bonaglia, V. de Luca, 2006, pp. 15

independence from European states<sup>12</sup>. According to some critics of the aid, the vast amounts of funding from Western countries to former colonies are an attempt for a different type of economic control.

From the very beginning the humanitarian aid was also a political choice: during the Cold War both the USA and USSR pledged to financially help poor countries depending on the political orientation of local leaders<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the decision to help or not a country was part of a complicated game of alliances.

During the 50's and 60's, development policies were experiencing a phase called industrialization. The economic dogma of the period was that the growth of development is proportional to the growth of a country's income and that the increase of income was easily obtainable with the increase the financial investment.

Thus, all available resources were used to improve industrial equipment. The economic theory of the time hypothesized a linear development, a process divided by consecutive stages; the forecasts of economists such as Walter Rostow suggested that by investing a certain amount of resources and a steady stream of investment, developing countries could recover the economic gap with the industrialized countries over a 10 to 15 year period.

However, this approach has failed: this type of development aid worked in Europe because, as far as it was concerned, it had maintained the necessary infrastructure for a rapid industrial recovery.

In the poor countries, especially the African ones, the technical structures, the bureaucratic regulations and the experience, needed for such an ambitious industrialization, were completely lacking.

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<sup>12</sup> 31 African states gained independence between 1956 and 1967, most of them formerly controlled by the Great Britain and France which maintained privileged economic relations with the former colonies.

<sup>13</sup> The USSR was particularly active in supporting the war criminal Menghistu Hailè Mariàm, leader of Ethiopia (1977 - 1991); While the US supported figures like Mobutu Sese Seko, dictator of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1965-1997).

In the 1970s development policies were changed<sup>14</sup>. The belief that quality of life was automatically improved by national income growth was abandoned as it had been shown that increased income had contributed to increasing inequalities.

In 1969, the World Bank published *Partners in Development*, a report of the results obtained. The so-called Pearson Report<sup>15</sup> was commissioned to analyze the results of the development policies of the previous 20 years. The report tracks an extremely negative analysis of the results obtained:

- The target of 5% growth had been achieved, but not homogeneously in the various countries
- The income available to the population had not grow as expected due to the demographic increase
- The actual link between growth and aid is very weak.

Thus, the new objective was to reduce poverty, improve the quality of life and increase employment in developing countries.

The World Bank, led by Robert McNamara<sup>16</sup>, developed new policies based on the idea that aid had to be focused only on actions and projects in favor of individual individuals rather than on state economies. That was the decade of the spread of NGOs working on the field to development projects.

However, the project of decreasing poverty did not work: the 1973 and 1979 oil crises<sup>17</sup>, the fall in commodity prices and political instability in developing countries led to a worsening

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<sup>14</sup> F. Bonaglia, V. de Luca, 2006, pp. 19

<sup>15</sup> Lester Bowles Pearson, former Canadian Prime Minister and Nobel Peace Prize winner, was commissioned by the World Bank to direct the Commission on International Development.

<sup>16</sup> Robert McNamara, former United States Secretary of Defense, was president of the World Bank between 1968 and 1981. He was a promoter of poverty campaigns in poor countries, also because he thought poor social contexts were fertile ground for communist ideology.

<sup>17</sup> The Energy Crisis (1973) was triggered by the Kippur War, the conflict between Egypt and Syria against Israel implied the rise in oil prices by the OPEC countries which ideologically and economically supported Egypt and Syria. The Energy Crisis (1979) Was caused by the Iranian revolution and the ensuing instability of the region. Both crises had heavy impacts on world economies, they contributed to increasing inflation and unemployment in developed countries.



of economic conditions. Many governments were forced to become indebted to face the crisis; this fact created the bases for the debt crisis of the 1980s.

In 1982, the Mexican government refused to pay the debts contracted by declaring insolvency, this action opened a debt crisis that would hit the United States and various Latin American countries. International financial institutions feared a chain effect that could worsen the global crisis, in order to address the problem, creditor countries proposed to debtor ones a debt restructuring plan that had to provides for more financial aid in return for accession to the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP).

The objective of this program was to stabilize the economy through structural reforms imposed on developing countries by the World Bank, the IMF and other international institutions.

Economist John Williams sums up SAP's goals by coin the expression "Washington consensus". It was so-called because all the key institutions (WB, IMF, USAID) had their headquarters in the US capital.

The Washington Consensus provided ten key points for developing countries<sup>18</sup>:

- A very disciplined fiscal policy
- Reducing public spending towards targeted interventions: facilitate efforts to support growth and the weaker bands
- Reform of the tax system, aimed at extending the tax base
- Moderately positive real interest rates
- Local currency exchange rates determined by the market
- Trade and import liberalization
- Opening and liberalizing investment from abroad
- Privatization of state companies

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<sup>18</sup> <https://piie.com/commentary/speeches-papers/what-washington-means-policy-reform>

- Deregulation: abolition of rules that prevent entry into the market or limit competitiveness
- Protection of the right to private property

Thus, in order to get aid, developing countries had to undergo significant structural, economic, political and social changes. Despite the premise, this program did not yield the expected results, and indeed, in the late 80's, structural adjustment became the target of fierce criticism, which indicated it as a means of control and oppression by liberal economies.

The failure of developing poor countries and the numerous economic crises of the 1990s (Asia 1997, Russia and Brazil 1998) forced the world of development cooperation to reflect on the effectiveness of structural adjustment. One of the major problems is identified in the poor quality of institutions and governance in developing countries. Has been underlined the crucial importance of local institutions for achieving economic and social development and how they are absolutely inefficient.

Therefore, the new paradigm is to increase the responsibility of local institutions in developing countries; in order to do this, closer cooperation is needed to allow donor bodies to discuss in advance with the beneficiaries about the realization and sustainability of the projects, it is necessary to ensure that projects are supported and implemented without boycotting them by minorities intended to maintain their privileges at the expense of the people.

The ownership process favors the appropriation of decision-making by local actors. In order to realize it, they take into account the interests of all elements of the community. Structural adjustment programs are therefore confirmed, but the IMF and the World Bank affiliate to them specific plans called Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

The distrust of governments in developing countries led to an increasing amount of funds allocated directly to NGO's which can work in the field with local communities through a participatory development model called Community-Driven Development (CDD). It suggests that local communities are the best acquaintances of themselves and therefore they are aware of the priorities; working with NGO workers, local people can handle the funding

money and use them for projects that are considered more urgent from them and not from an external institution.

Despite the efforts to increase development, the 1990s recorded a marked decline in humanitarian aid. Donors were tired because of three decades of failures and with the change of the geopolitical context (fall of the USSR) the use of aid lost part of its value as a form of political control<sup>19</sup>.

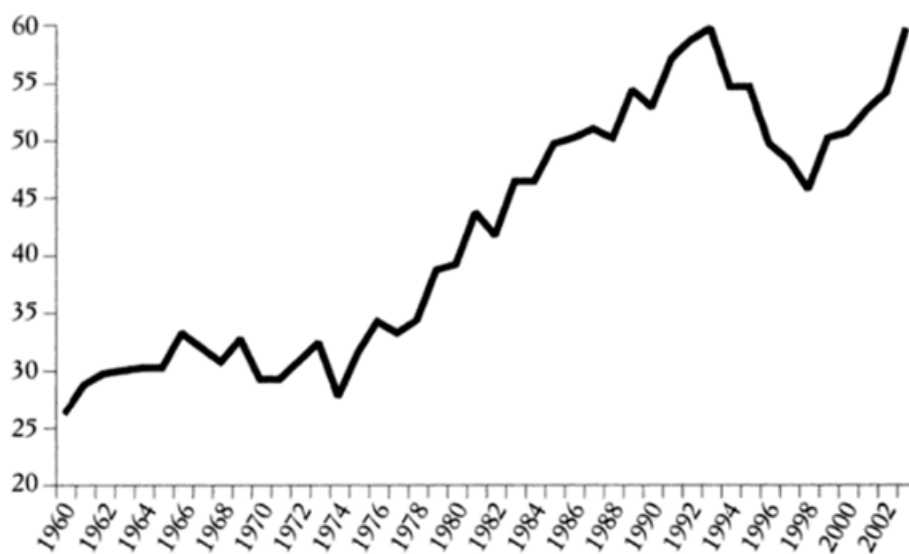


Table 3

The table (3)<sup>20</sup> shows the volume of international aid in billions of dollars between 1960 and 2003. We can notice the exponential increase in aid between 1974 and 1993 and the subsequent collapse. Since 1998, there has been a rapid recovery in aid which increases in 2000s. Two terrible events that deeply affected it were the the 11th September and the consequent "war on terror". In the same period, there were other factors: the debt cancellation campaigns of poor countries and the UN Millennium Development Goals initiative.

<sup>19</sup> Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid*, Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2010, pp. 57

<sup>20</sup> William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, Penguin Books, 2007, pp. 206

## 2.3 Debt Cancellation Policies

The IMF policies provide that development aid granted to poor countries are not donations but loans. They are loans with very low interest rates, often totally absent but including the agreements which provide for their repayment. For this reason, the IMF subscribes to the governments concerned agreements in which they undertake to always pay the IMF first and only then the other creditors.

However, this countermeasures are totally useless in the case a government declares its own insolvency and consequently the impossibility of paying any debt.

Thus, the IMF has been tasked with monitoring the state debt situation with the aim of keeping the level of debts as low as possible and convincing governments to demand reasonable loans and only when necessary. However, the very formula of the agreements is problematic: the Fund provides the first installment of a loan to a state before it makes any type of economic change or structural adjustment. So, they are trusted loans and this was, and still is, a big problem with regard to the use of money and the repayment of debts.

The process of IMF loans created a vicious circle between the Fund and the beneficiary countries: one of the "solutions" found by the IMF was to continue to lend to developing countries; these loans had to be used to pay the debts contracts with the old loans. The IMF's objective was to protect investors and avoid the insolvency of the country concerned. However, this fact created a dependency relationship.

Once a state enters into a mortgage relationship with the IMF, it is almost impossible for it to emerge, at the same time it is highly unlikely that the Fund will succeed to recover the funds lent. The number of countries, making a long-term use of IMF funding, has been exponentially increasing since the 1980s.

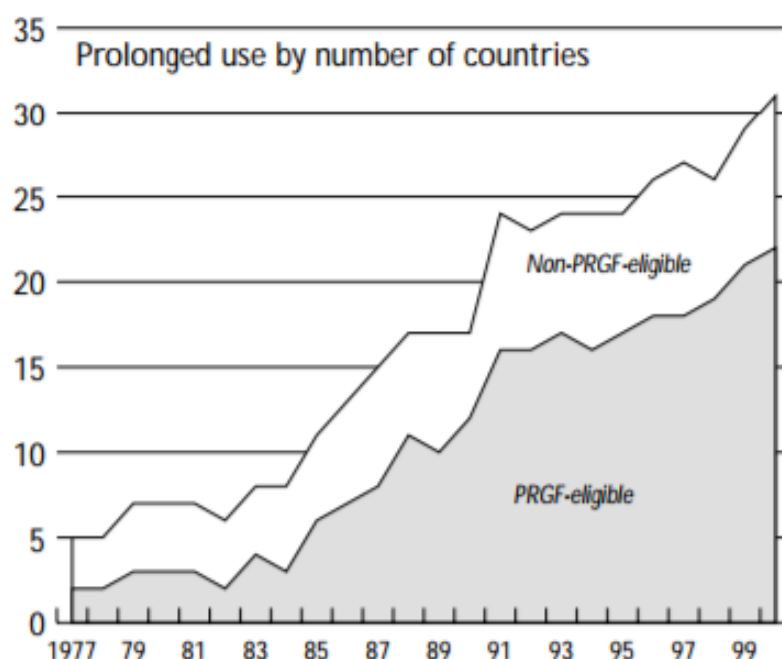


Table 4

The table (4)<sup>21</sup> shows how, between 1977 and 2000, the number of countries with a long-term use of IMF funding has increased, from five in 1977 to more than thirty in 2000; there was a sharp increase since the '82, the year of the Mexican debt crisis. Countries are divided into eligible or ineligible PRGFs. The Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGFs) is an IMF program launched in 1999 replacing the previous Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF).

<sup>21</sup> International Monetary Fund, Evaluation of prolonged use of IMF resource, 2002, pp. 31 <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/EPUI/2002/pdf/Report.pdf>

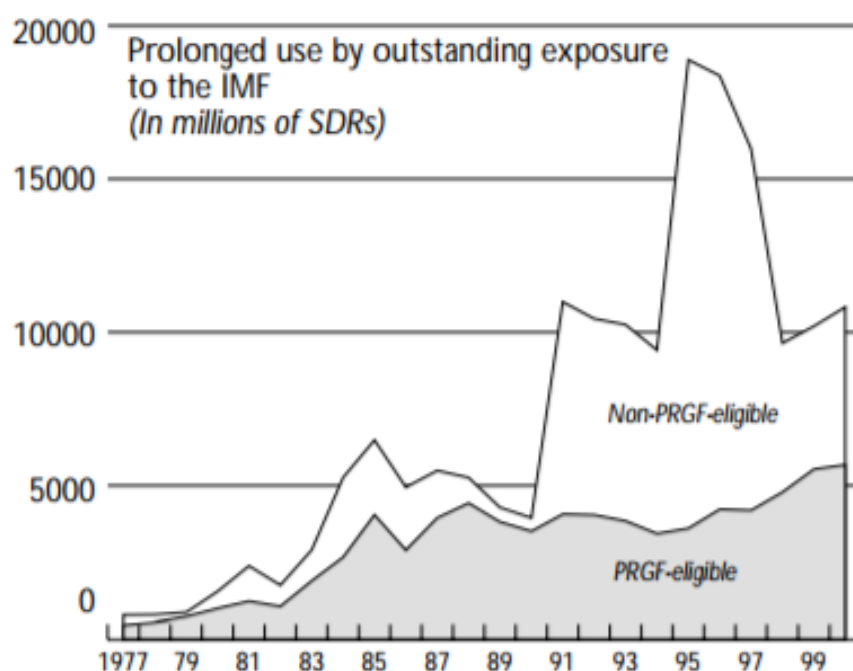


Table 5

In the table (5)<sup>22</sup> we can analyze the volume of IMF loans expressed in millions of SDRs<sup>23</sup>, the loan requests reached a peak between 1993 and 1998 in conjunction with the reduction of development aid from the rich countries and private donors.

In a 2002 study<sup>24</sup>, the IMF itself highlighted the risk of this continued use of loans. we can find how the Fund's plans are based on exaggeratedly optimistic growth forecasts which are never met, which has led to underestimation of the risks and not to assess the effects over the long run.

The IMF has lost a large part of its influence due to a continuous loan of money to countries that do not respect the terms of restitution and who do not efficiently apply the structural qualification plans.

<sup>22</sup> International Monetary Fund, Evaluation of prolonged use of IMF resource, 2002, pp. 31  
<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/EPUI/2002/pdf/Report.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Special Drawing Rights is a special currency. It is used by the IMF and its value is an average of US dollar, euro, sterling, yen and yuan values.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2002/12/goldsbro.htm>

In other words, the debtor countries are aware that the IMF will not "close taps" but that it will continue to lend the money needed to avoid a crisis of insolvency<sup>25</sup>.

The amount of debts accumulated by developing countries reached a critical level in the 1990s. In 1996, the Fund and the World Bank inaugurated the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program with the aim of regulating the debts of poor countries. One of the most important choices was to cancel some of the debts, this was a historic decision and much encouraged by many international organizations and public opinion.

However, even the decision to cancel debt was not without contradictions and criticisms: the countries that were granted debt cancellation were the most profoundly indebted ones and benefited from structural loans at an over-average level, on the contrary, to a large extent Of non-critical indebted countries has been denied the total or partial cancellation of the debt and they have been invited to improve the economic situation by continuing with structural planning.

Thus, in fact, the debt cancellation system rewards the countries with the worst economies, those who have ineffectively managed loans and financing and led their economies to critical levels. For many critics, this mode depreciated the poor but responsible countries and encouraged them not to worry about improving things: it is easier to get unsustainable debt levels and then to have them canceled rather than successfully rearrange a troubled economy.

Since 1999 the structure of the HIPC has been partially renewed, the procedure for requiring the total or partial cancellation of the debt requires commitments from the debtor countries<sup>26</sup>; they must demonstrate that they have obtained certain economic and structural results before they can be eligible for the program.

However, one of the key points required by HIPC recites: "Face an unsustainable debt burden that can not be addressed through traditional debt relief mechanism<sup>27</sup>".

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<sup>25</sup> William Easterly, 2007. Pp. 256

<sup>26</sup> F. Bonaglia, V de Luca, 2006, pp. 88

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2016/08/01/16/11/Debt-Relief-Under-the-Heavily-Indebted-Poor-Countries-Initiative>

It means continuing to limit the virtuous countries who can not hope for a debt reduction until their situation is disastrous.

<b>35 Post-Completion-Point HIPCs <sup>1/</sup></b>				
Afghanistan	Comoros	Guinea	Malawi	São Tomé and Príncipe
Benin	Congo, Dem. Rep. of	Guinea-Bissau	Mali	Senegal
Bolivia	Congo, Rep. of	Guyana	Mauritania	Sierra Leone
Burkina Faso	Côte d'Ivoire	Haiti	Mozambique	Tanzania
Burundi	Ethiopia	Honduras	Nicaragua	Togo
Cameroon	Gambia, The	Liberia	Niger	Uganda
Central African Republic	Ghana	Madagascar	Rwanda	Zambia
<b>1 Interim HIPCs <sup>2/</sup></b>				
Chad				
<b>3 Pre-Decision-Point HIPCs <sup>3/</sup></b>				
Eritrea	Somalia	Sudan		

1/ Countries that have qualified for irrevocable debt relief under the HIPC Initiative.

2/ Countries that have reached decision point under the HIPC Initiative, but have not yet reached completion point.

3/ Countries that are eligible or potentially eligible and may wish to avail themselves of the HIPC Initiative and MDRI.

Table 6

In the table (5)<sup>28</sup> are presented the 35 eligible countries for a complete debt cancellation, Chad is eligible for a partial cancellation while Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan do not yet fully meet the requirements for access to the program.

Most of the countries belong to sub-Saharan Africa, which confirms itself the poorest and most difficult region. The value of debts canceled since 1996 amounted to approximately \$ 75 billion in 2014<sup>29</sup>.

Debt reduction programs were thought of as extraordinary interventions and they were based on highly optimistic GDP growth forecasts in the recipient countries. In fact, the development forecasts assumed by IMF and the World Bank turned out to be largely wrong

<sup>28</sup> IMF – WB, Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (Hipc) Initiative And Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (Mdri)— Statistical Update, 2013 pp. 7

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTDEBTDEPT/ProgressReports/23514662/HIPC\\_update\\_12-19-13.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTDEBTDEPT/ProgressReports/23514662/HIPC_update_12-19-13.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2016/08/01/16/11/Debt-Relief-Under-the-Heavily-Indebted-Poor-Countries-Initiative>



and debt cancellation did not stimulate the growth of HIPC countries just as previously they had not done with lending.

Growth forecasts expected by the IMF were on average 4% of income per capita for countries belonging to the program. However, real growth was on average 2%, which should be considered with relative population growth over the same period. Thus, for many countries there was not a real growth and in some cases there were periods of further recession.

This is the case of Bolivia which, as can be seen in the table (7)<sup>30</sup>, after reducing its debt in 1998 saw its income declining sharply against the forecasts of the Fund which had believed in a steady improvement in subsequent years.

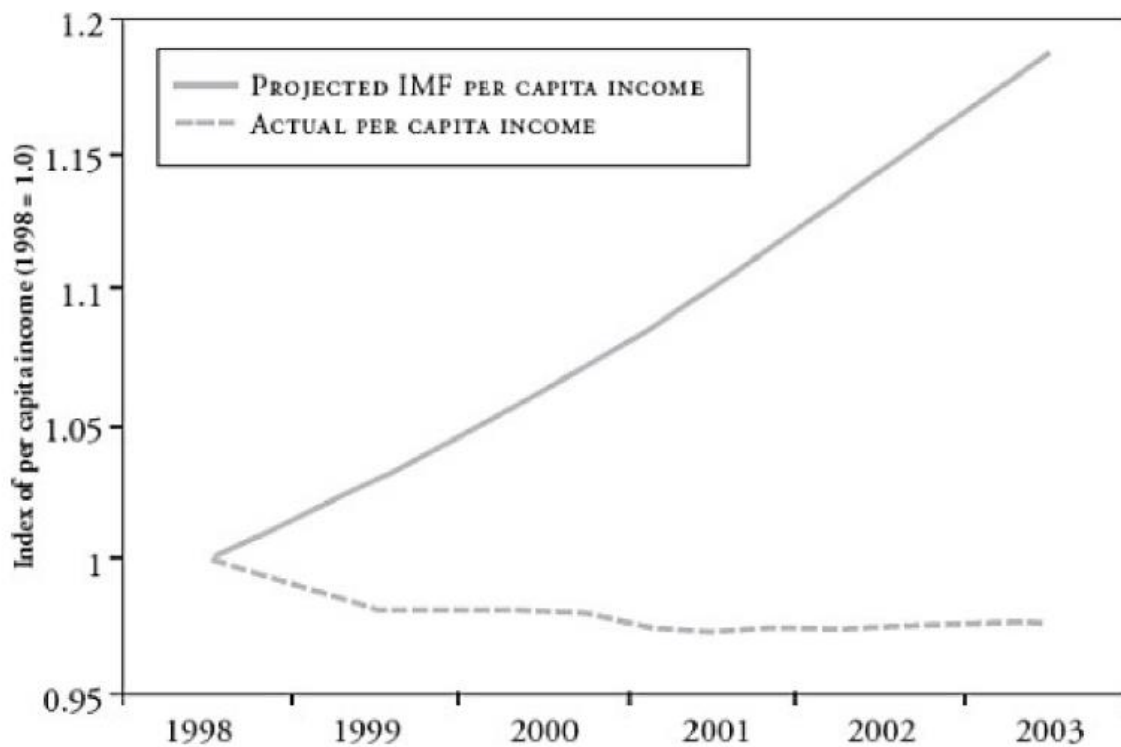


Table 7

<sup>30</sup> William Easterly, 2007, pp. 260

The ongoing failures in revitalizing the economies of the HIPC countries turned the debt reduction from extraordinary practice to a routine one. In 2005, a total debt cancellation of 18 heavily indebted countries was decided. Many of these countries had already used the debt reduction or cancellation in the 1990s, but the lack of improvements prompted the IMF to repeat the procedure without any particular success.

The stasis situation that has emerged is one of the great contradictions of development cooperation; the inability to find an alternative to this system has transformed the IMF into an aid agency that provides huge amounts of cash: also the beneficiary countries are not encouraged to return the money received because they are aware that periodically the debts will be canceled, furthermore they are also disincentive to make significant economic improvements as a sharp improvement in income would entail the obligation to pay off old debts and the inability to cancel them.

# III Chapter

## A Brief History of International Humanitarian Cooperation

### 3.1 The Red Cross and the First War Experience

The first organized international volunteer experience dates back to the second half of the eighteenth century with the foundation of the Red Cross.

Henry Dunant, a Swiss activist, participated actively in the second Italian war of independence and was particularly impressed by the traumatic experience of the Solferino battle (1859). When he returned to his homeland he founded, together with four countrymen, the first nucleus of what would become the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). It was formally founded in Geneva on 29 October 1863 with the participation of fourteen countries<sup>31</sup>.

The flag they chose was the Swiss one but with reversed colours. This was done not only to emphasize the Committee's geographical maternity but also to reiterate the situation of neutrality that would characterize the association.

This neutrality was confirmed during the first diplomatic conference in Geneva (8-22 August 1864) attended by 12 states, including the United States. This conference led to the creation of the Geneva Convention through which was deliberated the neutrality and the safeguarding of staff, facilities and structures of the volunteers of the Red Cross over that of civilians involved in the aid of the wounded.

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.icrc.org/>

Thus, in the course of years independent national committees were created in many European countries. Even though these committees were independent, they continued to cooperate with each other.

In 1908 the possibility of accession to the Committees was extended to women with the creation of the body of the Red Cross Nursing Service.

The first world war was the first great challenge of the Red Cross. In the course of the war the number of associated increased markedly. In some countries of the front, like Italy, the National Committee was included in the military corps making to all effects the volunteers of the Red Cross members of the army with the function of aid<sup>32</sup>. In the Italian case, this situation still exists in our day.

The participation of the Red Cross was relatively effective in respect of the aid to the wounded or to the prisoners of war but was essentially useless from a political point of view: the various complaints made by the Red Cross regarding the many infringements of the Convention Ginevra fell in a vacuum.

### 3.2 The Second World War and Foundation of the United Nations

After the First World War, in 1920, Pierre Cèrèssole, another Swiss, created the first "field of work" on a voluntary basis<sup>33</sup>. The goal of the young pacifist was the reconstruction of Esnes, a small village situated on the border between France and Germany. The site was chosen as a symbol for a pacification of the two countries and many volunteers from both sides (and from other European countries) participated in the reconstruction working alongside those ones who had been their mortal enemies two years before.

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<sup>32</sup> Storia della Croce Rossa Italiana dalla nascita al 1914, Costantino Cipolla , Paolo Vanni, 2013

<sup>33</sup> [http://archives.sci.ngo/uploads/documents/sciia\\_archives-documentation\\_sci-service-esnes-1920.pdf](http://archives.sci.ngo/uploads/documents/sciia_archives-documentation_sci-service-esnes-1920.pdf)

This experience led to the creation of the Service Civil International (SCI). In the course of a few years the activities of the SCI covered not only the redevelopment of villages destroyed by the war but also areas affected by natural disasters, or economic and social crises. Especially after the Second World War the SCI will become one of the largest organizations of international cooperation.

The creation and development of ICRC and SCI are the two most important examples of a way of doing voluntary work and cooperation of aid that will go on for decades. The shares of aid are framed in the context of military support and the political power of associations is extremely poor.

During the Second World War, the ICRC was hit by a turbulent internal debate about the possibility of abandoning its historical neutrality to denounce the events of the Nazi concentration camps. It was decided to maintain this neutrality in order to be able to continue to help the prisoners but this silence was a hard blow to the image of the Red Cross.

The terrible and devastating experience of two world wars over thirty years induced the governments of the time to seek new instruments which could prevent other tragedies of this kind. In San Francisco on June 26 1945 winners and losers adopted the United Nations Declaration. With this act the states transformed the bankrupt League of Nations into the most organised United Nations (UN). The functions of the UN are four<sup>34</sup>: 1) to maintain peace and international security; 2) to develop friendly relations among nations; 3) to cooperate in the resolution of international problems and in the promotion of human rights; 4) to be center for the harmonization of national policies.

In order to pursue these goals the UN provided itself of different organs and operational structures: the general assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat and the International Court of Justice. To these fundamental infrastructures will be added over time many specialised agencies (FAO, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, IAEA etc.) as well as various Funds and Programs<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/sc/about/structure.shtml>

It is in this context the need to give a legislative and legal formalization to the universal human rights was born. This took place in Paris on December 10 1948 with the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which clearly stated that the peacekeeping process depends directly on the respect of human rights and universal decent living conditions.

As emphasized in the preamble which declares:

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.<sup>36</sup>”

### 3.3 The great changes of the '60s

Since 1920 international voluntary organizations have been spreading in all over the world. The organizational approaches and operational experience were replicated in many countries by creating a model identity through which to operate. After World War II many other associations were formed; they followed the predetermined model for several decades but during the sixties they changed radically the pre-existing models caused by numerous events.

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<sup>36</sup> [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR\\_Translations/eng.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf)

During his electoral campaign, the future president John Fitzgerald Kennedy hypothesized the creation of an association of international voluntary service which aimed to improve relations with the countries of the third world, in particular those of the Middle East. The creation of this association was inserted in the electoral program of Kennedy called New Frontier.

After the victory Kenney put into effect his program and created a voluntary association that until now is one of the largest in the world: the Peace Corps<sup>37</sup>.

The creation of these Peace Corps carried an important diversification to the nature and to the identity of the voluntary work in the United States. According to its statutes the president of the association is, by law, the vice president of the USA while the Executive Director is appointed by the president. In addition funding is defined and controlled by the American Congress.

The cyclical obliged change of the leaders of the association and the nature of its financing make the Peace Corps an association directly dependent from the political elite temporarily in charge.

The particular hierarchical situation of Peace Corps is not always appreciated by other NGOS or by developing countries, its political nature is considered in marked contrast to the commitments of neutrality and confidentiality, which characterize most of the NGO.

The dangerousness of the consequences that may develop when the management of an NGO is closely linked to the interests and to the political will of a country is a recurrent theme in the course of the decades. Topic which also touches Italy. The Committee of the Italian Red Cross is in fact the only one in the world to maintain its status as a military association.

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/history/founding-moment/>

### 3.4 The crisis of Biafra

In 1967 the regions of ethnic Igbo proclaimed a secession from Nigeria by creating the Republic of Biafra and unleashing a bloody civil war. The Nigerian Government reacted hard through military interventions and isolating the fledgling Republic. The insulation, in conjunction with a strong famine, had resulted in the death by starvation of many people, especially children, belonging to the ethnic Igbo.

It is estimated that about 3 million people died during the three years of this conflict and for the decimation of the Igbo population the Nigerian Government was accused of genocide<sup>38</sup>.

The crisis of Biafra had a profound impact on the western population. The advent of television allowed the spread in an exponential manner of a large number of images shocking for the unprepared world public opinion. The images of an entire generation of children from the swollen bellies from hunger were shocking images for a world and a society which still had in mind the horrors of the second world war.

The reaction of the public opinion put a lot of pressure on government and requests for assistance were continuous. The President Lyndon Johnson submerged by telegrams and extremely nervous arrived to blurt: "get those nigger babies off my TV set<sup>39</sup>" shortly before to authorize a countryside of aid to the populations of Biafra. However most of the governments and the United Nations themselves decided not to intervene in what was considered an internal affair.

Thus, the war in Biafra was the first major event of interventional mobilization managed mainly by non-governmental organizations. The International Red Cross played a dominant role in the organization of emergency assistance and, thanks to an impressive donation campaign, it saw its budget increase enormously. It organized an airlift, the largest from the times of the Berlin one, to bring food and medical assistance to the affected populations.

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<sup>38</sup> Peter Baxter, *Biafra: The Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970*, 2015

<sup>39</sup> Warren I. Cohen, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy 1963-1968*



As well as during the Second World War there were internal discussions and ethical problems. In agreement with the Nigerian Government and in harmony with its own statute the Red Cross agreed not to disclose and denounce the crimes of which it was witness and to deal only with the aid and assistance. In order to that It asked its volunteers to subscribe a declaration of neutrality creating sometimes dissatisfied. One of these volunteers was Bernard Kouchner, a doctor and the future French minister.

He went with the French Committee of the Red Cross<sup>40</sup> but after his return he proved to be very critical with the Red Cross saying that its neutral attitude had damaged the population of Biafra and had allowed the Nigerian army to continue with its crimes. As a result of this experience Bernard Kouchner founded in 1971 Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders MSF) that became in a short time one of the most important and influential NGOs.

The crisis of Biafra gave way to the phenomenon of emergency NGO. In subsequent years the number of voluntary associations increased exponentially, in addition to the already mentioned Médecins Sans Frontières many others were born such as: Feed the Children (1979), Médecins du Monde (1980), ActionAid (1972), Vis (1986), CESVI (1985) and so forth. The large associations already existing increased their prestige and influence. In addition to the Red Cross associations such as Oxfam or Amnesty International became important players in the context of international cooperation.

The new role of international NGOs was "officialized" by the key role that they began to have in the international debate and in the UN conferecens, since 1972 at the Stockholm Environment Conference, to which numerous NGOs had actively participated<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> [http://www.redcross.int/EN/mag/magazine2001\\_4/kouchner.html](http://www.redcross.int/EN/mag/magazine2001_4/kouchner.html)

<sup>41</sup> Khi V. Thai, Dianne Rahm, Jerrell D. Coggburn, Handbook of Globalization and the Environment, 2007

### 3.5 The genocide of Rwanda and its consequences

In 1994 one of the most violent historical genocide was consumed. Within a few months about a million people were slaughtered in the small African state of Rwanda.

On 6 April 1994 the plane on which the Rwandan president Juvenal Mr Habyarimana and the president of Burundi Cyprien Ntaryamira were travelling was shot down.

The vacuum of power, tragically created, flared up the existing tensions between the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), composed of members of the Tutsi ethnicity and Rwanda Armer Forces (FAR) which were mainly of Hutu ethnicity<sup>42</sup>. The country, already in precarious socio-economic conditions, was devastated by a terrible blood-bath.

The reaction of the United Nations reaction was late and It was strongly criticized as ineffective. On the contrary the response of NGOs proved to be immediate and of large proportions. In the space of a few weeks were hundreds of non-profit organizations, which reached the country to bring humanitarian aid. However, the gravity of the situation and the size of the aid emphasized once again the total lack of coordination between the various associations by creating, in fact, an operational chaos.

This evident organizational inability will have an important impact on the future of international cooperation.

The new government of Rwanda, installed after the end of the war, obliged to a sort of recording the NGO that wished to continue to operate in the country. Even if this initiative was right and necessary to coordinate aid it became an instrument of control and a sort of selection process of NGOs empowered to work in the country. Sometimes the selection is not based on humanitarian grounds but on political reason<sup>43</sup>.

The Rwandan government of President Paul Kagame began to expel NGO considered "inconvenient", the NGO that did not align to the political thought in charge and that were denouncing violations and harassment of the government itself.

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<sup>42</sup> Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, 1998

<sup>43</sup> Laurence Binet, *The violence of the new Rwandan regime 1994-1995*, 2013

This practice of political selections of the NGO was resumed in other contexts. As in Chechnya of Putin or Ethiopia of Menghistu.

Rwandan events had important consequences in the world of the NGOs. The need to deepen the forms and the quality of humanitarian intervention was raised.

To meet this need the European Union inaugurated in 1997 the Sphere project<sup>44</sup> (Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response). The aim of the project was to define the criteria for the evaluation of humanitarian interventions and establish quality standards for NGOS.

In the same year the British Red Cross promoted People in aid<sup>45</sup>, a code of good practice useful to NGOs as a tool to improve the interventions quality of their operators. Many agencies intervened in Rwanda created a platform for the evaluation of the respective interventions called ALNAP (Active Learning Network for Accountability). This project is still active today and is working in the definition of evaluation criteria, especially during the natural disasters.

One of the more innovative initiatives that were taken as a result of the Rwandan intervention was the foundation of the Group of the Urgence Réhabilitation Développement<sup>46</sup>. The URD was the first association to understand and divulge one of the major discrepancies of humanitarian intervention in disasters or emergencies. The attitude of the NGOs to focus only on the emergency interventionism involves deficiencies and sometimes even counter-productive effects.

Humanitarian aid used, and still use, to solve a crisis then "move away" in order to face the next one, leaving in the country, some negative effects. Help with capacity, aid, experiences and then removing them, often abruptly, creates large organizational gaps in assisted countries. Gaps that are often difficult to fill. The founders of the URD realized that it needed a step of "rehabilitation" after the resolutions of conflicts or the overcoming of the

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.sphereproject.org/>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.chsalliance.org/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.urd.org/>

emergency. A phase in which It is necessary to work with local players to restore, or establish, the conditions for a sustainable and lasting development.

The concept of aid over the long term will affect definitely the world of international cooperation and humanitarian interventions.

In 1998 the United Nations approved the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders<sup>47</sup> in which were settled rules, procedures and strategies of humanitarian interventions. The example of UN was followed by many national and international institutions which provided themselves of new codes in line with new policies for humanitarian assistance.

The international agreements were disrupted shortly afterwards in 1999 with the NATO attack in Kosovo. The violation of international law by the United States and the subsequent placement of the US Office of Humanitarian Aid under the jurisdiction of the Pentagon left room for so-called "humanitarian wars" and criticism derived from them.

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/Declaration.aspx>

# IV Chapter

## Humanitarian Wars

### 4.1 The New Wars

In the last decade of the twentieth century a new type of intervention in the contexts of conflict started developed. The so-called "humanitarian wars" were born: situations with forms of intervention in war zones justified by humanitarian grounds and sometimes with preventive agreements between military environments and associations of aid. In these contexts, the war is organized already planning a humanitarian intervention simultaneously to military action. Thus, wars are designed through the introduction of subjects and humanitarian projects as active interpreters of a wider design.

The humanitarian wars are also asymmetrical wars. Those wars in which one of the parties is so powerful to be able to start a war with the certainty of victory. Since the beginning of the conflict, they already know who will win and lose. These kinds of wars are also asymmetric for the disparity in human losses between the contenders; the major powers can use superior technologies and effective tools to confine victims only on the opposite side.

This has led to a "standardization" in the vision the war by a large part of western societies. They are constantly at war but the lack of victims, and the certainty of victory, have led to an acceptance of the public opinion in general; popular outrage usually ends few weeks later since the beginning of military intervention. The war has become something very far, not only geographically, because it does not affect our lives.

The first important case of humanitarian war took place during the conflicts that bloodied the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s.

During the Bosnia and Herzegovina war (1992-95) and during the next Kosovo War (1996-1999) NATO forces intervened militarily through heavy bombardments<sup>48</sup>. These military interventions took place without the mandate and the approval of the UN and they were a clear violation of international law. They were justified by NATO as interventions in defense of the Albanian and Kosovan populations, which were about to be exterminated by the Serbian government of Slobodan Milošević.

Thus, these interventions were presented as actions for the defense of human rights of oppressed peoples.

The intervention during the Yugoslavian conflict was also a way to "retrain" the image of the United States as defender of human rights; image that was ruined because of the no-intervention during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In this regard, the Clinton administration said that the United States had been "learned from history"<sup>49</sup>.

The intervention in the Balkans was above all a demonstration of strength by NATO and consequently by the United States. The intervention was denied by the UN because of the veto of China and Russia, the violation of the international customs had no impact on the United States so after that they launched a long list of humanitarian wars (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria etc.).

This new way of conceiving armed interventions created great debates in the the world of cooperation and peace movements. Associations, organizations, institutions and even individual operators found themselves, usually despite them, to work in enormously problematic contexts and through an extremely different logic than the one they planned.

If this interweaving of humanitarian world with military organizations was a chance event or the fruit of precise political strategies is still a matter of debate. What is certain is that over the years we have seen a marked change in the conception of international cooperation and humanitarian workers.

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<sup>48</sup> Operation Deliberate Force (1995) and Operation Allied Force were the first two military actions of NATO. Both started without the consent of the UN.

<sup>49</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/stories/1999/03/25/clinton.transcript/>

## 4.2 The Change of International Politics

The structural change of international relations occurred after the end of the cold war. The fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the subsequent decommissioning of the USSR marked the end of a decennial confrontation between the United States and the USSR. The two hegemonic powers and their confrontations had dominated the international relations, under every aspect, until the fall of the URSS.

The collapse of this dualistic balance created a profound change of policies of individual states and non-governmental organizations.

Humanitarian agencies theorized their right to freedom of action outside control and confrontation with state institutions and governments. Non-governmental organizations invoked the so-called “right to interfere<sup>50</sup>”. The right to intervene and provide assistance without the limits imposed by the sovereignty of the states.

Bernard Kouchner was one of the most important supporters of this radical change. He was a member of the French Red Cross during the crisis of Biafra, one of the founders of Medicines Sans Frontiers (1971) and Médecins du Monde (1980). He was then Commissioner for humanitarian aid in Kosovo and Minister for humanitarian aid in France.

Kouchner was one of the first theorists of the humanitarian intervention. According to his thought, military intervention in defense of human rights, without taking into account the right of sovereignty of the states, is legitimate.

In line with the thought of Kouchner, a large part of the world of international cooperation formulated the thought that the right to the defense of human rights was superior to the sovereignty of states. At the same time, they argued that it was right to recognize to NGOs a new subjectivity which could be taken and used in these new contexts. Thus, the NGOs demanded a sort of political role.

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<sup>50</sup> Gareth Evans, *The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and For All*, Brookings Institution Press, 2009, pp. 32

Another important aspect to be considered is the profound transformation of military strategies by the most powerful countries.

The development of new contemporary wars is clearly different from the classic way of doing war. Modern war is no longer a clash between states and armies. The modern war is no longer a conflict between well-defined fronts, It is difficult to define and understand the new wars. They are mostly internal or civil wars and with numerous and varied players in the field: institutional and non-institutional subjects, normal armies, foreign armies, armed groups, warlords, mercenaries, private military companies etc. Each of them with personal purposes, despite of alliances and agreements. The panorama of war is therefore much more complex than in the past<sup>51</sup>.

It is in this context of confusion that the "militarization" of humanitarian interventions has occurred. This transformation took place in a much more formal way than we might think of.

In 1992, former US President Ronald Reagan held a speech at the Oxford University Union during which he spoke of ongoing wars in Somalia and Yugoslavia:

"Just as the world's democracies banded together to advance the cause of freedom in the face of totalitarianism, could we not now unite to impose civilized standards of behaviour on those who flout every measure of human decency? [...] What I propose is nothing less than a human velvet glove backed by a steel fist of military force<sup>52</sup>"

During his speech Reagan suggested how humanitarian interventions was about to replace of the Cold War as a new justification for Western leadership.

The following year, in 1993, Anthony Lake, Bill Clinton's National Security Adviser, held a speech at the John Hopkins University's Advanced International Studies School in Washington.

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<sup>51</sup> Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security (Critique Influence Change)*, Zed Books, 2001

<sup>52</sup> Ronald Reagan, "Democracy's Next Battle", December 4, 1992  
[http://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ls/Urquhart\\_RelDoc3.pdf](http://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ls/Urquhart_RelDoc3.pdf)



Through his discourse, Lake theorized an evolution of strategies compared to the one that had characterized the Cold War: The Containment strategy was a set of policies and actions aimed at halting the Soviet advance and guarding, with economic aid above all, border countries and it was now obsolete.

The new doctrine proposed was the Enlargement one. The strategy was to make the United States and the Western countries a nucleus of liberal democracies from which to expand the democratic-liberal verb in the rest of the world. Nucleus that also had to be a market nucleus, of course. The goal was to transform countries formerly under the Soviet bloc and now lacking ideology in interesting outlet markets.

Countries expressly opposed to the new American doctrine were called Rogue States. Thus, there was the beginning of a delegitimization of countries opposed to this expansion and market strategy.

The enlargement doctrine was presented in four points by Lake<sup>53</sup>:

"First, we should strengthen the community of major market democracies - including our own - which constitutes the core from which enlargement is proceeding.

Second, we should help foster, consolidate new democracies, and market economies, where possible, especially in states of special significance and opportunity.

Third, we must counter the aggression - and support the liberalization of states - hostile to democracy and markets.

Fourth, we need to pursue our humanitarian agenda not only by providing aid, but also by working to help democracies and market economics take root in regions of greatest humanitarian concern. "

As it can be seen, Lake underlines, rather openly, future approach strategies to the former Soviet states and to the "rogue states".

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<sup>53</sup> Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement", September 21, 1993, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html>

The fourth point highlights how the humanitarian dimension has now become very important in US policies. - Not only it was unusual for a military political advisor to speak of a humanitarian agenda, Lake also pointed out how the goal was to export and strengthen market economies in countries affected by humanitarian crises.

Lake's speech continues and reveals lots of key points that will determine the foreign, military and humanitarian policies of the United States for many years to come.

"Our humanitarian actions nurture the American public's support for our engagement abroad<sup>54</sup>"

That is, humanitarian aid helps and justifies US military intervention in other countries in the eyes of international public opinion.

"Our humanitarian efforts can also stimulate democratic and market development in many areas of the world."

The deployment of humanitarian subjects in fragile areas, in states that are not clearly defined or external to the traditional Western systems can lay the foundations for favourable institutions and market prospects.

"Ultimately, the world trusts our leadership in that broader effort in part because it witnesses our humanitarian deeds: it knows that our responses to hunger and suffering, from Bangladesh to Somalia to Chernobyl, are an expression of who we are as a nation."

The strong will to build a United States humanitarian image. To play the role of defender of human rights; this desire to create such an image, almost propagandistic, is also witnessed by the sending of various directors and operators to film the US troops landing in Somalia (ongoing civil war) almost as if it were a cinematic set.

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<sup>54</sup> Anthony Lake. 1993

### 4.3 The Change of Military Strategies

“We have the best relationship with the NGOs who are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team”

Collin powell 2001 Secretary Colin L. Powell Remarks to the National Foreign Policy Conference for Leaders of Nongovernmental Organizations; october 26, 2001

Changes in political strategies also led to changes in military organizations. Western military elites understood that in this new world dominated by the market NGOs and large humanitarian projects needed a different approach. Thus, they took a key role in expanding control and political-economic alliances in the world.

The elaboration of wars and humanitarian interventions became parallel and no longer consequential. In the early 2000s, the military began writing manuals to redefine military strategy for the next few decades.

For the first time, humanitarian activities were incorporated into the equation. In 2003, a study was published on how heads of state imagine the forms of military intervention of the future "An Evolving Joint Perspective: US Joint Warfare and Crisis Resolution in the 21st Century<sup>55</sup>".

In the table (1)<sup>56</sup>, taken from this study, it is possible to analyze the spectrum of violence in the various cases of conflict.

The left column is the traditional war. The other two columns have the term "mootw" or: Military Operations Other Than War. The colour ranges from the red light of traditional war to dark green for activities that do not involve the use of force. The more you move to the right the more the activities become supportive activities, civil help or peacekeeping. At the end, we can find "humanitarian and civil assistance"

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<sup>55</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, An Evolving Joint Perspective: US Joint Warfare and Crisis Resolution in the 21st Century, 2003. [http://edocs.nps.edu/dodpubs/org/JROC/JROCM\\_022-03.pdf](http://edocs.nps.edu/dodpubs/org/JROC/JROCM_022-03.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2003, pp. 2

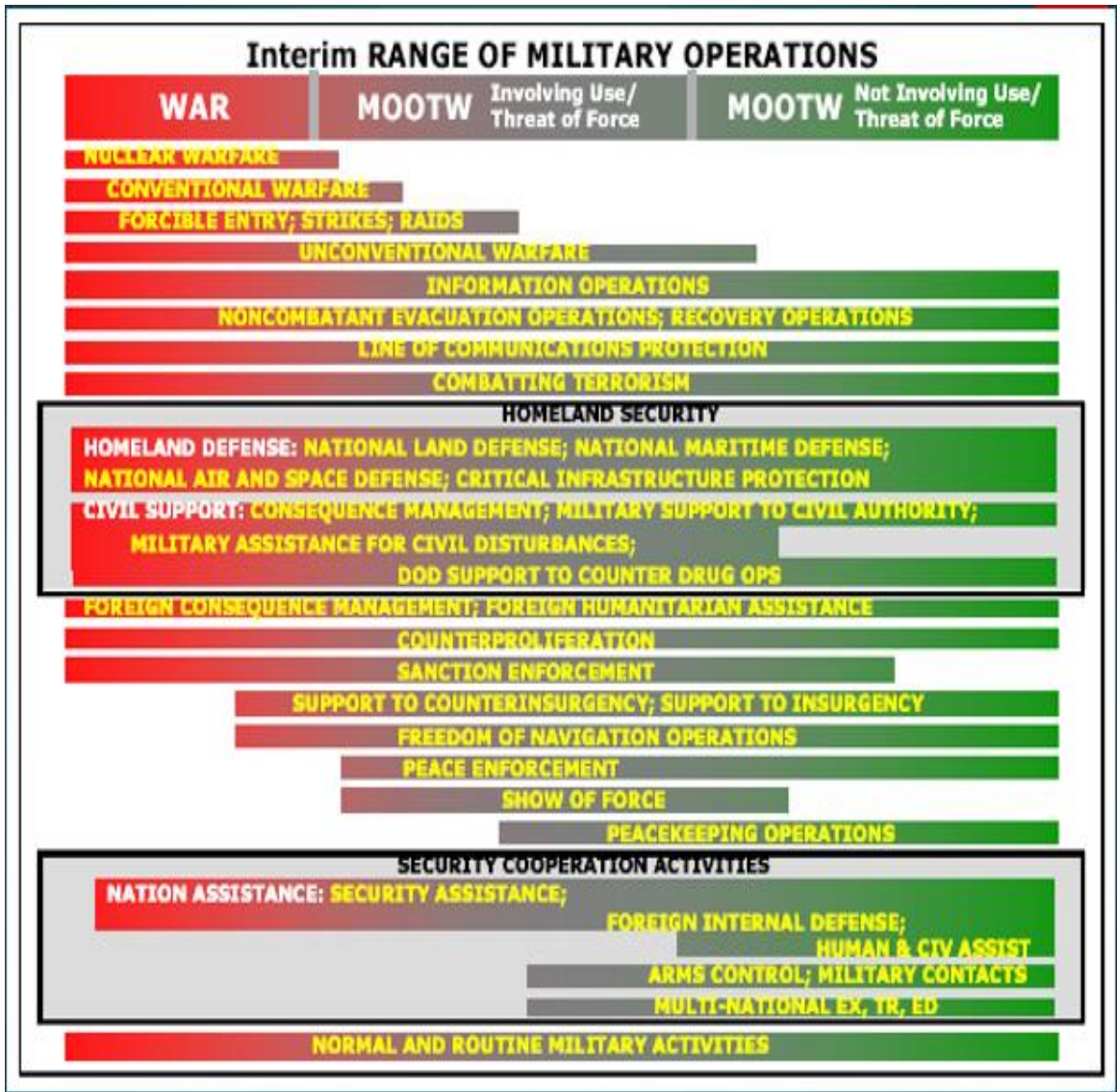


Table 1

This study shows how military world begun to think that military operations are no longer just the armed ones, but that they involve a broad spectrum of operations of different kinds. Sometimes traditional. Sometimes support such as construction, water supply or food distribution. It is therefore difficult to understand the difference between military or humanitarian logistics.

The change of military tactics and the implementation of no-violent interventions was not only an American feature.

In 1999, they published " Unrestricted Warfare<sup>57</sup>". Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, two Chinese colonels that codified the new rules of modern wars, wrote it. They presented the new types of war which could be aggressive but not necessarily conducted by military personnel such as commercial wars, financial wars, computer wars, forced privatizations, and so on.

In addition to these operations carried out by non-military personnel but still, aggressive they also described no-military war operations that did not contemplate the use or the threat of force, compulsion, or retaliation.

They talked about phenomena such as: Humanitarian aid carried out by humanitarian organizations used to control the population, to feed the fighters, or to convert them into weapons; about the buffering and humanitarian sterilization of war refugees; medical assistance to wounded fighters; peace-building.

All aspects previously considered only humanitarian and now incorporated into a military planning logic.

The first practical example of this new type of intervention was the Iraqi war in 2003 (the Second Gulf War). In fact, this war had as a long-term plan with well-defined phases by the United States. Not only an offensive and destructive phase but also a buffering and control phase followed by a stabilization phase.

The division of remunerative reconstruction contracts had been decided even before the start of the war; the countries that had refused to participate in the war (France, Germany, Russia, the most important ones) were excluded from contracts and business opportunities<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> Qiao Liang, Wang Xiangsui, Unrestricted Warfare: China's Master Plan to Destroy America, Echo Point Books & Media, 2015

<sup>58</sup> [http://desantis.hypermart.net/EnsignStories\\_801-913/Ensign\\_story840/pentagonNYT.pdf](http://desantis.hypermart.net/EnsignStories_801-913/Ensign_story840/pentagonNYT.pdf)

Thus, war was thought as a single continuum: After the occupation, a management phase was necessary during which essential humanitarian assistance had to be provided by NGOs; this phase had to be followed by a political occupation through a temporary governor, international institution, political emissaries and a process of institution building. Through the interweaving of these policy manoeuvres with the allocation of resources occupying forces tried to create a new market.

However, the effects of these plans have proved to be unpredictable. Not only from a political and economical point of view, but also for NGOs that began to show great difficulties.

#### **4.4 The Change of The Role of NGOs**

“The perception among communities you're helping is always that you are part and parcel of the same military operation.”

Nick Guttman, Christian Aid

Since the end of the 1990s, in conjunction with the militarization of humanitarian interventions, aggressions and attacks on NGO staff deployed in conflicting countries have been increasing dramatically as well as kidnappings, redemption requests, bombings and various types of attacks on humanitarian.

Particularly relevant is the case of the Italian Red Cross. Formally, it is still a department of the Italian army and as such, it appeared on the field with armed stocks and military means.

In 2004 their Baghdad medical center was bombed. However, it was not the only case, and even officially, pacifist associations like Emergency, devoid of any form of defense, were heavily attacked.

NGOs had to face the onset of a serious problem they could not predict. The perception of wars as humanitarian intervention was not a prerogative of Western powers but occupied

populations saw it at the same way as well. NGOs had fallen into a context in which all the locals (the population, the armies, the rebels, etc.) no longer received humanitarian aid as a neutral actor but as an integral part of a single occupation plan. What they were, at least partially.

At the time of the birth of the Red Cross, the objective was to create a neutral space between conflicting contenders, to present the aid organization as a stranger and neutral actor with the sole purpose of defending the "humanity" regardless of political contexts.

Over the decades this NGOs neutrality became a praxis. Workshop camps and humanitarian corridors were standing for almost a century in dozens of conflicts in every area of the world and their neutrality and safety was always accepted, except very rare cases.

Nowadays attacks on NGOs and humanitarian workers are the result of a chaotic context, where the subjects in the field are manifold and each with personal aims. A context where lots rules are no longer considered and where respect for the human rights has failed. Humanitarian and military have theorized that interventions could be parallel, that humanitarian legitimacy and military interference could blend. Through this interweaving, the idea of a neutral third space has vanished.

Eyal Weizman, an Israeli architect and intellectual, makes a significant analysis of the political importance of humanitarian management. In his book "The Least of All Possible Evils"<sup>59</sup> he analyzes the logic through which Israeli military and politicians plan the forms of intervention against the Palestinians.

He explains how the management of the "Palestinian affair" is entrusted to experts which have the task of calculating the "breakpoints" of public opinion, how many victims during a raid or how much of the humanitarian aid to the Palestinian population can be reduced without reaching a humanitarian collapse and, consequently, an international case.

Eyal Weizman states that not only war must be thought as an economy of death or humanitarianism, but that the role of humanitarian intervention in critical contexts (as in

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<sup>59</sup>Eyal Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza*, Verso Books, 2012

Palestine) must be also exploited as a mean of control. As NGOs administer basic assets such as food, water, medical care their role has been included in Israeli logic as tool of control.

The objective, in the case of Israel, but not only, is to work on the boundaries of humanitarian rights and to move their boundaries more and more, to make a form of ever more extreme control over the local populations more slowly becoming more acceptable.

The Palestinian case is paradigmatic. The problem of migrants affecting many countries in the world is generally managed and followed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR's goal, and usually the will of states, is to facilitate the return home of refugees or distribution in a safe place.

Only for the Palestinian cause was created the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which has subtly different goals: to try to reduce the number of returning Palestinian refugees to prevent them from entering Conflict with Israel and the Israelis. To achieve this goal, the practice is to stabilize and make permanent Palestinian refugee camps (Jordan, Gaza, Libya et al.). Field management is primarily entrusted to NGOs, which in fact play a controlling role over a population.

Thus, there is a risk that a great number of organisms find themselves within logics and contexts to which they do not belong. Sometimes it is difficult to understand who has control of these logics and when NGOs find themselves "hostages" of policies decided by others.



# V Chapter

## The Effects of International Cooperation

### 5.1 Introduction

The effects of international development cooperation are a highly debated subject. In emergency situations (famines, wars, natural disasters) the humanitarian aid system is crucial to save as many lives as possible, and this is a fact that raises few objections. The issue of co-operation arises when international institutions replace the political organs of the assisted countries.

In recent decades, there have been many cases in which some international actors have had the right to make decisions about poor countries' policies. These actors may be international political / economic institutions (IMF, WB, UN) or even individual states (especially the USA but also some European and Asian countries); usually many institutions work together for a common purpose.

The aim of this international interference, which often violates the sovereignty of states, is always to propose an improvement, a development. It can be a process of economic development, democratization, defense of human rights and other more or less specific objectives. This process is sometimes "imposed", especially in war time, but more often it is required by developing countries which want the help, loans, resources and knowledge of Western institutions.

The will to bring economic and social development in the poor countries through continuous aid has turned out to be a difficult road full of contradictions and problems. The economic dependence that some countries have developed over the decades has created even weaker states than before and has put entire states and populations in a fragile balance.

## 5.2 Loans and bankruptcy

Since the 1990s some scholars have begun to pay attention to the worrying connection between the failure of the states and the financing plans of the International Monetary Fund.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Year of bankruptcy</b>	<b>Time in IMF programs (%)</b>
Afghanistan	1977	46
Angola	1981	0
Burundi	1995	62
Liberia	1986	70
Sierra Leone	1990	59
Somalia	1991	74
Sudan	1986	58
Zaire	1991	73

*Table 1*

Table (1)<sup>60</sup> shows the eight cases of failed states, the year of the failure, and the percentage of time spent by the states adhering to the IMF recovery plans during the ten years preceding bankruptcy.

We can see that, except for Angola<sup>61</sup>, all states have spent a considerable amount of time in Fund programs. Some of these states reach even higher rates if they consider a wider period than ten years: Liberia, for example, rose from 70% to 77% when considering the 1963-1985<sup>62</sup> period.

Thus, there is a statistical connection between perpetual adherence to IMF programs and the possibility of collapse of a state. This phenomenon is due to structural adjustment imposed by IMF on developing countries in return for the granting of the required loans. The underlying issue is the conviction of Western planners that a political and economic model can be applied indiscriminately in every context.

Unfortunately, the fragile economies and structural weaknesses of poor countries were not ready for the radical changes required by the IMF, and probably they are not yet. Large amounts of money invested in developing economies have not found societies and structures ready for their effective use, and forced attempts at political and social changes have often contributed to increasing ethnic conflict.

Huge aid to the development of poor countries has often unintentionally contributed to fueling and supporting coups, armed groups, civil wars and other violent situations that have dragged countries into anarchy and collapse.

In Liberia, President Samuel Kanyon Doe was accused of electoral fraud in the 1985 elections, this fact hardened the domestic tensions that exploded in the first Liberian Civil War.

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<sup>60</sup> Data available in: Robert I. Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, Paperback, 2003

<sup>61</sup> Not all organs agree in defining Angola as a failed state. Institutions such as the World Bank consider the country failed in the early 80s and still economically unstable. However, other sources such as Foreign Policy have always classified the African country as not in serious economic danger. [http://fride.org/download/WP81\\_Angola\\_failedyetsuccessful\\_ENG\\_may09.pdf](http://fride.org/download/WP81_Angola_failedyetsuccessful_ENG_may09.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, 2003

The war blew the country from 1989 to 1997, and resumed shortly after 1999. In Somalia, the "failed state" par excellence, the dictator Mohammed Siad Barre was dismissed after a civil war. Which had sunk the country into a state of anarchy ruled by the so-called "warlords"; the many economic and military interventions promoted by the UN and the Western institutions over the last 25 years have not been able to deal with the tragic situation that still exists

The case of Sierra Leone is an example of the IMF's willingness to persist with its lending policy: the African country was part of a structural change program since the late 1970s, in 1991 the Sierra Leonean civil war broke out during which the RUF rebels committed horrible crimes against the civilian population; under the pressure of the United Nations, and militarily disadvantaged, RUF accepted a truce which allowed the free elections to take place in 1996<sup>63</sup>.

During this brief period of relative peace, the IMF immediately reintegrated Sierra Leone into the adjustment and funding programs; the war broke out again in 1998 and it ended definitively in 2001 only thanks to United Nations armed intervention. Immediately after the end of the conflict, the Fund granted new loans, proposing new adjustment plans which have not yet brought significant improvements to date.

Obviously, the collapse of states can not be attributed solely to the intervention and programs of the Fund and other international institutions. The social, political and economic conditions of these countries were already profoundly ill and structurally fragile. Indeed, it is difficult to prove with certainty that the interference of the Westerners has contributed to the failure or whether these countries would have suffered the same epilogue in every case because they were too compromised and hopeless.

However, we can see how the "medicine" proposed by the Fund has often been useless; the huge resources used, endless loans and planned changes have hardly ever led to the hoped-for result.

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<sup>63</sup> Abidjan Peace Accord, 1996

In "White Man's Burden" William Easterly traces another parallel between the development of poor countries and participation in fund programs. He examines countries with the worst growth rate and compares them to those who have shown a better development<sup>64</sup>.

The ten countries with the best growth rates of per capita income (1980-2002)

<b>Country</b>	<b>Per capita income growth (%)</b>	<b>Aid / GDP ratio (%)</b>	<b>Time in IMF programs (%)</b>
South Korea	5,9	0.03	36
China	5,6	0,38	8
Taiwan	4,5	0.00	0
Singapore	4,5	0.07	0
Thailand	3,9	0,81	30
India	3,7	0,66	19
Japan	3,6	0.00	0
Hong Kong	3,5	0,02	0
Mauritius	3,2	2,17	23
Malaysia	3,1	0,40	0

*Table 2.1*

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<sup>64</sup> William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, Oxford University, 2006, pp. 246

The ten countries with the worst growth rates of per capita income (1980-2002)

<b>Country</b>	<b>Per capita income growth (%)</b>	<b>Aid / GDP ratio (%)</b>	<b>Time in IMF programs (%)</b>
Nigeria	-1,6	0,59	20
Niger	-1,7	13,15	63
Togo	-1,8	11,18	72
Zambia	-1,8	19,98	53
Madagascar	-1,9	10,78	71
Ivory Coast	-1,9	5,60	74
Haiti	-2,6	9,41	55
Liberia	-3,9	11,94	22
Congo (RDC)	-5,0	4,69	39
Sierra Leone	-5,8	15,37	50

*Table 2.2*

The two tables show twenty countries, ten with the highest growth in per capita income (Table 2.1) and ten with the worst growth rates (Table 2.2). For each country, the ratio between international aid received and gross domestic product (in percentage) and the time spent by states within IMF programs during the period considered (1980-2002) is shown.

Thus, we can once again see that the Structural Change Plans and the Loan Policy, promoted by the Fund have not proved effective in promoting development in the recipient countries.

Moreover, as Easterly points out<sup>65</sup>, it is worth noting that the greatest development successes have occurred in countries that have not been (or minimally helped) by international institutions. This is a demonstration of how the Western dogma which holds that the development of poor countries is only possible through the help and guidance of Western institutions, is wrong.

The development of these economies has been possible because each one of them has followed a specific pathway that has taken into account the uniqueness of culture, history and local society. They have not followed follow a standard path imposed by foreign institutions, but they have chosen their own way often in open contrast to Western ideologies, as in the case of Communist China or Thailand of military dictatorships.

Obviously, in this case too, it should be emphasized that this statistical relationship between aid and the growth of the economy is not a definitive ruling. We can not make sure that aid and loans destroy poor countries while the absence of international aid implies a secure economic development. However, we can consider that economic development is possible even in the absence of aid, or with very small aid, and that lending policies are not an effective solution as they lead to dependency situations.

Another factor that can be seen from the comparison between poor and growing countries is the clear difference in development between the countries that underwent European colonization and those who remained independent.

Five<sup>66</sup> of the ten best income-generating countries have never been fully colonized, while the other five have already a defined cultural awareness (like India); others were "special" colonies which were born as commercial outlets and not as areas of exploitation (Singapore and Hong Kong). The reason for the success of these countries can not be limited to the common geographic context, since other colonized Asian countries, such as the Philippines, have not experienced effective development and are still today among the "poor" countries.

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<sup>65</sup> William Easterly, 2006, pp. 251

<sup>66</sup> China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Taiwan

Obviously, there are important exceptions: poor contexts such as Ethiopia, a non-colonized country<sup>67</sup>, show that the absence of colonialism and Western interference does not automatically imply economic development and well-being. However, it is statistically relevant as most "success stories" have occurred in countries with limited external intervention, either with colonialism and with international aid programs.

In contrast, all ten countries with the worst economic development are former colonies and they have long benefited from aid programs getting huge funds. The growth of these countries, almost all Africans, has always been considerably reduced since the beginning of their colonial occupation: Per capita income grew only 0.6% annually from 1870 to 1913 and 0.9% between 1913 and 1950<sup>68</sup>, it was a slight improvement but totally insufficient compared to the development of European countries.

### 5.3 The consequences of colonialism

For authors like Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson<sup>69</sup>, the extreme poverty of some countries at the beginning of the 21st century is the result of decades of Western colonialism. In particular, they state that it is important to consider the different forms of colonialism and how they have led to different consequences: the "soft" colonialism of the commercial code in Asia was very different from the exploitation of colonialism in Africa.

Europeans were never interested in colonizing Africa in the narrow sense by establishing in it or by creating new communities as done, for example, in South America.

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<sup>67</sup> The short period 1936-1941 can be considered as military occupation rather than as colonialism

<sup>68</sup> Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: a Millennial Perspective*, 2001.

<http://theunbrokenwindow.com/Development/MADDISON%20The%20World%20Economy--A%20Millennial.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, James A. Robinson, *The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation*, 2000.

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w7771.pdf>



Africa was conceived as a territory to exploit and as such was managed; the absence of communities and fixed establishments, with the exception of South Africa, prevented the importation of institutions (laws, government systems, etc.) that could have contributed to the economic development of African countries.

The effects of colonialism on African society have been studied, among others, by Senegalese historian Cheikh Anta Diop, who argued that Western interference has blocked African development since the sixteenth century<sup>70</sup>; he argued that at that time the social and cultural development of some African countries was at the same level, if not better, than that of European countries. Europe's occupation and violent exploitation would therefore irreparably halt the companies that were preparing for a welfare state.

Diop's vision has been highly criticized, it is judged by many emphatically and unrealistically, but it has helped to create an African "awareness" and underline the effects of European employment. The stimuli introduced by Diop and other African scholars during the 70s and 80s led to a new type of international interaction: the demand for compensation. Since the early 1990s, many former colonial African countries have begun claiming compensation from Western countries as reparation for economic and social damage caused by centuries of colonialism, exploitation and slave trade.

Claims for damages were formalized at the Durban Summit in 2001<sup>71</sup>; some African countries, particularly Nigeria and Zimbabwe, asked Western countries to apologize for their colonial past and for the crimes they committed, and also asked that former colonizers pay heavy compensation to repay the damage done to the African people; the demand was made by recalling how Germany had to pay heavy reimbursements to the Israeli people after World War II.

African requests to Durban were only partially accepted: there was an acknowledgment of the perpetuated crimes by Western countries which pledged to finance campaigns against HIV or to reduce public debt.

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<sup>70</sup> Cheikh Anta Diop, *Nations nègres et culture*, 1955

<sup>71</sup> World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) the 2001 one was the third edition and it was mainly focused on Israeli-Palestinian conflicts.

However, claims for economic compensation were ignored, particularly from the United States. The "moral" victory (the recognition of the guilt of Western countries) at the expense of the economic one, implied an internal reflection on African society; many critics, politicians and scholars, conceived that to continue claiming compensation was a counterproductive factor for African culture.

Former Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade stated that he would be offended if someone had asked him for how much money he could have forgotten about slavery<sup>72</sup>. This positioning highlights the views of many African leaders and scholars. For many of them, the "confession" and the recognition of their faults by the colonizing countries were enough; perpetuating economic demands would keep African countries in a state of international dependence and victimization at the same time.

It is what Anne-Cécile Robert defines the "trap of reparations"<sup>73</sup>: the risk of focusing on demands, which presumably will never be met without focusing on concrete issues. In the same way as dependence on aid, the vain hope of obtaining financial compensation contributes to the "infantilization" of Africa, which, wrongly or reasonably, is always looking forward to external concessions rather than actively promoting an internal improvement.

This intrinsic victimism is defined as "African paranoia"<sup>74</sup> by former African center minister Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, it would be just a mask to hide the African inability to question itself.

New requests were made in Addis Ababa in 2003 during the Second African Social Forum, this time the instances did not concern the colonial past or the slave trade but the damage and the consequences of the structural change programs imposed by the international institutions. Even then, economic demands were ignored, and yet another attempt to claim money in one way or another was criticized, albeit less widespread than in the past.

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<sup>72</sup> Le Figaro, Paris, 31 August 2001

<sup>73</sup> Anne-Cécile Robert, *l'Africa in soccorso dell'occidente*, EMI, 2006, pp. 100

<sup>74</sup> Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, *L'Afrique sans la France*, Albin Michel, 2002, pp. 203

As emphasized by Senegalese historian Ibrahima Thioub too often Africa and Africans demonstrate an inability to admit that modern situations are also due to the actions of the Africans themselves.

The continued demand for aid, funding, and compensation to foreign powers as if they were a superior parental figure comes from the "inferior" victimization that many African populations now have of themselves.

According to Thioub, it does not matter whether it is: colonialism, slavery, post-colonial interference or humanitarian aid, the Africans conceive themselves as the fruit of others' actions without considering that a part of responsibility for the tragedies suffered has always been local; from 16th century slave hunters to post-colonial dictatorial regimes, through the perennial corruption of structurally weak systems and the waste of enormous amounts of aid without foresight, Africans have always had some blunders that they have tended to forget through a process of irresponsibility.

#### **5.4 Case study: Sudan**

William Easterly in "White Man's Burden" tries to analyze the impact that Western policies have on developing countries, particularly by presenting the complex case of Sudan<sup>75</sup>.

Sudan's development process has been, and is still, among the most turbulent and dramatic despite the complex general situation in African countries. In 1955 the country gained independence from England but the British, for reasons still debated, decided not to divide the country according to ethnic and religious groups by merging the North Arab Sudan with the South Sudan of African ethnicity. In this division, it was privileged the will of the Arab peoples to keep control over the whole country, subjugating the ethnicities of the South as historically had always done.

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<sup>75</sup> William Easterly, 2006, pp. 340

The will of the southern exponents and the conflicting relationship between the two groups were known by British politicians<sup>76</sup>, but the demands for independence of South Sudan were not taken into account, laying the groundwork for the numerous civil wars of the years to come.

In 1956, Sudan formally gained independence and a constitutional commission was set up to plan the organizational structure of the new state, of the forty-four members of the commission only three came from South Sudan, effectively extraditing the southern region of the country from power management. This outcome was interpreted by historians as a result of international decisions, which had formally granted independence to the country but had handed it without taking into account the internal issues and conflicts due to the different culture; so, in this way they did not allow African populations to have a self-determination in sud Sudan<sup>77</sup>.

The consequences of this forced union were immediate and civil war was inevitable. Between 1955 and 1972, there were continuous clashes between the southern independent armies and the northern government army. These 17 years of conflict accounted for about half a million victims, most of them civilians. Sudan in 1956, the year of independence, was inserted in the list of the poor countries in need of international aid. In 1971, it was ranked by the World Bank among Least Development Countries (LDCs).

In 1972, with the Addis Ababa agreements, peace was signed. The North government agreed to grant sufficient South East Sudan autonomy and despite sporadic minor clashes, peace lasted for about a decade.

The conflict violently flared up again when in 1983 President Jafar Numeiry revoked the autonomy of southern Sudan and imposed Islamic law, the shari'a, to the whole country. The civil war that followed was one of the bloodiest in African history: between 1983 and 2005; there were about 2 million deaths and a high number of refugees.

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<sup>76</sup> Francis M. Deng, *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan*, Brookings Institution Press, 1995, pp. 26

<sup>77</sup> Douglas H. Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, Indiana Univ Press, 2003, pp. 180

President Numeiry had the support of the West, particularly the United States. The US government, initially with Jimmy Carter and later with Ronald Reagan, considered the Sudanese president an important strategic ally to defend American interests in Africa in contrast to Gaddafi's Libya and Mengistu Ethiopia<sup>78</sup>.

Despite the war, the violations of the Addis Ababa agreements and the imposition of Islamic law, Numeiry obtained from the US about \$ 1.5 billion in aid<sup>79</sup>.

After his death, assassinated in 1985, his Islamic successors continued their alliance with the West, the World Bank lent about a billion dollars to the government of the north in the period between 1983 and 1993 (so also in full civil war) these loans had humanitarian purposes but ended up financing further the ongoing conflict. The relationship between Western institutions and Sudan was interrupted in 1993 following the First Gulf War when the African state supported Saddam Hussein's Iraq and was therefore included in the US "blacklist".

Relations were re-established in 2002, under Bush presidency, in the context of an alliance in the so-called "war on terror." US support has enabled Sudan to relaunch relations with the World Bank and the IMF who praised the will of sudanese leaders to "reduce poverty"<sup>80</sup>.

Despite the projects and the words of circumstance, the reality was that various international institutions had come back to support and finance a country under religious dictatorship and a ongoing civil war.

A report by Médecins sans frontières in 2002 underlined how continuing fighting, famine and drug scarcity were decimating the civilian populations of the region.

The Second Sudanese Civil War ended in 2005 with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Peace agreements provided for Sudan's autonomy for six years, after which, there was a referendum for independence.

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<sup>78</sup> Bill Berkeley, *The Graves Are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe and Power in the Heart of America*, Basic Books, 2002, pp. 210

<sup>79</sup> William Easterly, 2006, pp. 342

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2003/cr03273.pdf>

Decades of civil war produced devastating effects on the country. In 1994, per capita income was lower than in 1956, the year of independence<sup>81</sup>; the country also recorded one of Africa's worst literacy rates and a strong dependence on international aid.

The 2011 referendum had a positive outcome. South Sudan gained independence, was recognized as a state by the United Nations, and started to be able to focus on the development of a disaster-stricken country. According to the parameters of the World Bank, North Sudan has reached the status of Lower Middle Income Countries (LMICs) while South Sudan is among the Least Development Country (LDCs)<sup>82</sup>.

Sudan is one of the developing countries receiving the largest amount of aid, a flow of about \$ 23 billion between 1960 and 2002<sup>83</sup>; a flow that, despite the end of the war and the achievement of independence, does not seem to diminish.

Between 2005 and 2011, international aid flows to Sudan (as a single country) stood at around \$ 2 billion a year. After the independence of southern Sudan, there was a balance between the aid granted to the two countries: about one billion dollars a year for both.

Since 2014 there has been a clear inversion of the trend: Northern Sudan aid has declined sharply, while those in southern Sudan has increased to double and has reached about \$ 2 billion against the "only" 800 million in the North; 2014 data were confirmed by the 2015 and 2016 ones<sup>84</sup>.

From this data it can be seen that the total lack of pre-existing political and social infrastructure is revealing a huge problem for South Sudan. The past of this small country is composed only of war without any long-term planning except those suggested by international institutions.

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<sup>81</sup> William Easterly, 2006, pp. 344

<sup>82</sup> <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>

<sup>83</sup> William Easterly, 2006, pp. 344

<sup>84</sup> All the data on: <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=TABLE2A#>

The context is slightly different for the North Sudan, which, despite years of war and military dictatorship, can rely on political, bureaucratic and cultural institutions that after the end of the civil war allowed an easier re-launch.

In 2012, Sudan joined the United Nations Development Assistance Program (UNDAF)<sup>85</sup>. The planned program<sup>86</sup> covered the three-year period 2013 - 2016 and provided four key points:

- Poverty reduction, inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods
- Access to the entire Sudanese population to Basic Services (water, food, health).
- Democratization, respect for laws and governance
- Social cohesion, peace consolidation and peace dividends

A review by the UN in 2016 showed a substantial failure of the program: many obstacles and inadequate mobilization had not allowed the expected results during the three-year period. Following this failure in 2017, the UN, in agreement with both Sudanese governments, proclaims a new UNDAF program for the three-year period 2018-2021<sup>87</sup>.

The objectives of the program are fundamentally the same as the one before, the will of the United Nations is to achieve them through greater mobilization and more targeted investment. The 2021 results are incorporated in UN 2030 and will be used to understand how the situation is in view of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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<sup>85</sup> It is a strategic, medium term results framework that describes the collective vision and response of the UN system to national development priorities and results on the basis of normative programming principles.

<sup>86</sup> [https://www.unops.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Information-disclosure/UNDAs/Sudan\\_UNDAF\\_2013-2016.pdf](https://www.unops.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Information-disclosure/UNDAs/Sudan_UNDAF_2013-2016.pdf)

<sup>87</sup> [http://sd.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/sudan/UNDAF/Sudan\\_UNDAF\\_En\\_2018-2021-E-Ver.pdf](http://sd.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/sudan/UNDAF/Sudan_UNDAF_En_2018-2021-E-Ver.pdf)

## 5.5 Case Study: Afghanistan

Soon after the attacks of September 11th, the United States began the so-called "war on terror", the two main targets were Taliban Afghanistan (2001) and Saddam Hussein's Iraq (2003). The two conflicts cost the United States a huge amount of money and aid for reconstruction was the highest ever since the Marshall Plan. Official development assistance increased rapidly and has remained at very high levels since then.

In 2000, Afghanistan received humanitarian aid for less than \$ 150 million a year, in 2002 the flows were nearly 1,5 billion of dollars.

The growth in aid was steady and exponential until it reached about five billion dollars annually between 2009 and 2013 and three billion dollars between 2013 and 2016<sup>88</sup>.

Since the beginning of the war almost \$ 50 billion has been donated from ODA, so this figure only accounts for development aid, not military spending or funding for private NGO projects. The real effectiveness of this huge amount of money is more than dubious. For years the country has been under NATO's military control, the withdrawal of Western troops initially set for 2015 has been repeatedly postponed<sup>89</sup>, the motivations put forward by US governments is that Afghanistan is still too politically and militarily weak to continue autonomously its own development path, especially under the pressures of the Islamic state that presses to enter the country, and the Taliban militias which have never been so strong since 2001.

In fact, 15 years of war, millions of deaths, tens of billions of dollars spent on humanitarian aid, and so many military spending, have led to a country that has been destroyed, hungry, ethnically divided and deeply dependent on international decisions.

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<sup>88</sup> <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=TABLE2A#>

<sup>89</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_113694.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_113694.htm)



Linda Polman in Afghanistan in 2007 tried to reconstruct the dynamics of humanitarian aid in the country; in her study she repeatedly points to the problematic and contradictory link between war actions and humanitarian activities<sup>90</sup>.

The relationship between the military and the aid was formalized by USAID policies, the body authorized to administer US aid. It proclaimed that all agreements with humanitarian organizations that would not align with the will of American foreign policy would be canceled. NGOs therefore start to become a limb of the US government<sup>91</sup>.

This forced collaboration will cause major security problems for all humanitarian workers who will work in Afghanistan in subsequent years. NGO members, classified by the Taliban as part of Western occupying forces, will become military targets.

As reported by Polman in 2007 it was extremely difficult to find in Kabul members of over 300 humanitarian organizations operating in the country. They, like the members of diplomatic corps and military elite, lived in fortified districts under the protection of private military and interacted little or nothing with the reality of the country or with the abandoned local population.

Of the many billions spent on development aid between 2001 and 2008, there is no practical feedback; the rare times in which projects are initiated, neither humanitarian operators nor diplomatic corps had the courage to go to examine the state of affairs and the development and effectiveness of projects. This implies a very ambiguous use of the money, with huge sums that literally disappeared.

Western organizations rarely come out from Kabul, so foreign agencies, sometimes small local NGOs, are often used to finance projects in various parts of the country, which often delegate work to someone else. The number of intermediaries before a project actually starts is four, and at each step some part of the funded money is retained.

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<sup>90</sup> Linda Polman, *War Games: The Story of Aid and War in Modern Times*, Viking, 2011, pp. 127

<sup>91</sup> Andrew Natsios, former director of USAID, *the new york times*, August 2004

An example of this process is proposed by CorpWatch<sup>92</sup>, a research agency that analyzed the case of a US \$ 15 million grant for construction of a freeway in southern Afghanistan. Using the UN as an intermediary, the money had gone from USAID to an American company which in turn had delegated work to a Turkish engineering company. At each step, a portion of the available money was lost (on average between 5% and 20% of the total amount), at the end of this cycle, economic availability was barely enough to build a slightly better road than the track already present and that, having no money for maintenance, is already in bad shape.

Polman brings another example of this waste of money<sup>93</sup>: a UN-funded \$ 150 million project for the construction of a residential neighborhood in 2002. The first organization to receive money was a Swiss NGO which, after retiring 20% of the funding, delegated work to an American organization that likewise retained another 20% of the money available and entrusted the work to a third organization which acted in the same way. The last organization in Afghanistan had only money for some construction materials, which, at a very high cost compared to the market price, entrusted to a shipyard owned by a local politician. At the end, of the \$ 150 million allocated by the UN for a major construction project, nearly all remained in the hands of Western organizations, populations benefiting from the project gained nothing more than just a few materials and firewood.

Co-operation numbers in Afghanistan post 2001 are impressive. Numerous local small NGOs have flourished in the area, which access large amounts of money by offering themselves as intermediaries for large international organizations. In 2004 local NGOs registered with the Afghan Ministry were 2325.

James Mazurelle, representative of the World Bank in Afghanistan, estimated that about 40% of humanitarian aid, numerous billions of dollars, was distributed irregularly<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>92</sup> <http://s3.amazonaws.com/corwatch.org/downloads/CorpWatch%20Afghan%20report.pdf> pp.8

<sup>93</sup> Linda Polman, 2011, pp. 132

<sup>94</sup> Declared to the French Press agency in 2006

Representatives of the embassies and Western institutions are convinced of the efficiency of the aid, claiming that only a small part of the funding is lost; they reiterate how the evaluation of the progress of projects is constantly applied through the display of photographs and documents.

In this regard, Polman interviewed a USAID Afghan operator who revealed that she often found irregularities such as the same photos used for dozens of different projects or falsified signatures used for hundreds of times by representatives of local NGOs. In other words, the bureaucracy and documentation of international cooperation is just a way to hide projects never realized with the awareness that no one will ever physically control.

Therefore, a large amount of funds is intended to finance local and, in some cases, Taliban militants; other funds are however wasted by the same international operators for their well-being.

The Dutch writer describes how all the members of the Western world (humanitarian, diplomatic, journalist, and military) have locked themselves in a luxurious neighborhood in Kabul and how much money has been spent to make this area safe and comfortable for its inhabitants.

The district of Wazir Akbar Khan is a collection of luxury hotels, fashionable venues and shopping malls all constantly defended by entire privately-owned contract armies that guarantee security in return for extremely profitable contracts.

Private military companies such as Blackwater or Dyncorp are formed by Western mercenaries who gain large amount of money by providing security services to politicians, diplomats, humanitarian workers, etc. These security services, however, are largely paid with the aid money and increase the hostility of the locals who are forced to live in distressed areas and have no access to the "rich" neighborhoods of what their city was.

In 2007, Kabul's entire city was devoid of electricity, except for Western occupied areas, where at the same time they opened up restaurants, cocktail bars, nightclubs, swimming pools and cinemas.

All funded partly by the help of the money and partly by Western entrepreneurs who took the opportunity to serve high-priced services to a full-fledged clientele<sup>95</sup>.

The deep tension created by this situation exploded in January 2008 when a Taliban group managed to penetrate a luxurious Kabul hotel and killing a dozen people. The attack led Westerners to increase security measures and to completely abolish the population from occupied areas; this reaction further hardened the premises.

The Afghan situation is in a vicious circle: lack of control over humanitarian aid increases corruption and favors Taliban movements, this fact implies increased security by the West, implying greater hostility to local populations more than before. The result is an extremely insecure country, hostile to the Western and with a reinvigorated Taliban movement.

## 5.6 Case Study: Bosnia

International co-operation activities in the form of humanitarian aid or institution programs may have negative effects also in countries in relative security. This is the case of Bosnia Herzegovina's post-Yugoslav wars.

Bosnia was the country most affected by the conflict that upset Balkan regions during the 1990s and was one of the most aided humanitarian aid. In 1995, at the end of the conflict in the area, aid flows to Bosnia amounted to over \$ 800 million<sup>96</sup>, a very high amount for the era and above all other cases of aid in the world.

The average annual aid level was very high until the end of the war in 2001, after which the satisfactory peace process of the Balkans has produced an ever-smaller amount of aid that was under \$ 150 million in 2015.

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<sup>95</sup> Linda Polman, 2011, pp. 140

<sup>96</sup> <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=TABLE2A#>

However, Bosnia remained the poorest and most difficult country among the Balkan area: per capita income is around \$ 11,000, a surely positive figure compared to other developing countries, but a very small average compared to European countries and also compared to other Balkan countries such as Slovenia (GDP 32,000 \$) and Croatia (GDP 23,000 \$)<sup>97</sup>.

However, according to Professor Claudio Bazzocchi<sup>98</sup>, the the riskiest problem that Bosnia has inherited from the war is the destruction of social and political fabric as a result of the dependence on the humanitarian industry and the programs of international institutions.

Bazzocchi studies, on the field, the dynamics and effects of international cooperation in Bosnia between 2002 and 2003, about eight years after the start of the aid process. He denounces the fact that during reconstruction process was not given importance to the existing social infrastructure and the relationships that they involved, especially in the area of social welfare.

According to the strategies proposed by the World Bank and UNDP, the welfare of the country should have been reborn through an economic recovery based on the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. These companies should have provided with loans, facilitated loans, vocational training and so on.

The programs turned out to be a failure, the findings of 2002 presented a country with a strong crisis, with very few exports, very poor industrial production and a deep dependence on foreign loans<sup>99</sup>. Bazzocchi argues that the great mistake of international bodies was to plan the revival of a country as a "technical" question; they did not take into account the uniqueness, predispositions and local context but they merely financed and managed a "standard" economic model, a working model in theory but not suited to the context in which it was applied<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>97</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bk.html>

<sup>98</sup> Claudio Bazzocchi, *La balcanizzazione dello sviluppo. Nuove guerre, società civile e retorica umanitaria nei Balcani*, Il Ponte Editrice, 2003

<sup>99</sup> [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/bosnia\\_and\\_herzegovina\\_2002\\_en.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/bosnia_and_herzegovina_2002_en.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> Claudio Bazzocchi, 2003, pp. 107

The country's industrial choices are primary and foremost policy choices and therefore should be part of the decision-making skills of local politicians.

However, the imposition of economic programs that were in line with the Washington Consensus delegitimized local authorities and increasingly limited their power and decision-making role.

Bosnia was historically accustomed to a socialist social security system based on state aid; during Dayton's agreements<sup>101</sup>, the international community decided not to fund state social infrastructure in Bosnia. Social welfare and services were entrusted only to international NGOs that financed private local NGOs.

Bazzocchi states how this decision had serious repercussions on the Bosnian social fabric. First, they marginalized the existing social services institutions, the Centers for Social Work. Centers for Social Work were institutions with different methodologies and programs from city to city, they were an integral part of local culture and had developed themselves in order to help communities depending on their specifics. With the advent of large grants and large NGOs these institutions have been partly abandoned, and many local operators, especially young people, have preferred to leave state structures to go to international institutions, because of much higher wages.

According to Mark Duffield's analysis<sup>102</sup>, Bosnia was a state with good social and political structures before the war, unlike other developing countries, particularly African ones; NGOs could have leveraged the existing infrastructure and ties to strengthen Bosnian society. Instead, they preferred to destroy and ignore pre-existing conditions by preferring to set up an aid system based on external assistance.

In addition, this decision was worsened by poor collaboration between various NGOs and international institutions who did not plan a shared development plan but preferred each to think about their own projects.

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<sup>101</sup> General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) was the peace agreement signed by representatives of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia in the US military base in Dayton.

<sup>102</sup> <http://odihpn.org/wp-content/uploads/1994/03/networkpaper03.pdf>

This inability to co-ordinate has led to many contradictions, even territorial: in fact, almost all development projects and humanitarian aid were concentrated in large cities, leaving small towns and rural areas to themselves.

The various policy decisions for the development of Bosnia during the 1990s proved unmanageable: entrusting the NGOs with the management of social services because they considered themselves "more reliable" created a system of dependence on aid that proved to be extremely damaging in the 2000s when funding and aid began to decrease.

Over the years, large international NGOs have funded hundreds of small local NGOs without worrying about their sustainability; with steady aid reductions, local organizations have been struggling to survive by trying to exploit with the few remaining aid.

Many local operators found themselves out of work and often without the possibility of returning to work for state-funded social services, which are now lacking funding.

The great problem of major international organizations is the absence of a social identity. They are large companies with almost unlimited budgets and they think in terms of efficiency and profit. Huge funding to Bosnian local NGOs ought to have been accompanied by social and cultural awareness that actively pushed operators to work to rebuild a social and economic fabric that should "walk alone".

However, as is it often happens in the international co-operation, they preferred to spend on technical projects and with immediate results, infrastructure construction, food distribution, gift of clothes etc. They are all important elements in an emergency environment but effective development co-operation should go beyond immediate and try to lay the foundations for a steady independent growth.

# VI Chapter

## The Debate on International Development Cooperation

### 6.1 Initial considerations

After the end of the Cold War and the conclusion of the East-West conflict the amount of Western interference in developing countries greatly increased through the form of humanitarian aid. In recent years many Western governmental and non-governmental organizations have perfected a very rapid and extremely direct intervention method. This intervention methodology is intended to intervene as quickly as possible in a specific place in response to a particular crisis, usually the subject of international public opinion.

Accelerated timelines and sectoral choices are the result of the need for NGOs to take advantage of ideological or political attentions that are being created in certain crisis situations. It is the ideological or political push of international public opinion that moves the actual funding to the projects of large NGOs and various international development agencies.

NGOs are therefore in a constant urgency with the aim of obtaining the necessary funding and starting rescue and development projects as soon as possible. This very rapid process often leads to a lack of mediation and direct collaboration between international organizations and Governments or public structures in the countries concerned.

The lack of communication with local infrastructures and the insufficient knowledge of the context in which they intervene are the main factors which have generated, over the years, great doubts and debates within the world of international cooperation.

There is a problem of dehistoricization: focusing only on the current emergency means not paying attention to the history, to the context, and to the social dynamics of the countries



in which they operate. Above all, they do not consider the ongoing structural changes and the relationship between the past and the future.

Changes of which the same NGOs are often involuntary protagonists. Focusing only on projects, NGOs lose sight of otherness and confrontation with local contexts and automatically consider life choices and social constructions as secondary technical issues. In this way, they undertake a process of subjectivism and depoliticization of the social structures in which they are located.

The many issues raised have forced the world of international cooperation to ask itself questions of an ethical nature, one of the crucial points is the influence, wanted or involuntary, that NGOs have on power management.

Are they promoting humanitarian aid projects contributing to a process of development and democracy or are they strengthening new forms of control, domination and power? Who is controlling, now and in the future, the military tool, the economic plans or the access to raw materials? Who will handle the services built through development projects and how? What kind of social structure they are contributing to create?

These, and many others, are the questions many NGOs have had to face, making a heated debate raise. Over the years many authors and scholars have contributed to the discussion by expressing numerous criticisms and highlighting the contradictions of international development cooperation.

## **6.2 The First Internal Criticism**

During the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s, the first studies emerged about the actual impact of humanitarian cooperation. These studies, which can now be regarded as classical ones, have mostly been written by former humanitarian workers.

Authors, who have long been involved in field work and who after years of dealing with the contradictions and ambivalences of the humanitarian world, elaborated explicit and problematic positions based on their own experience and work.

One of the first "best sellers" about humanitarian issues was "Deadly Aid"<sup>103</sup> written by Brigitte Erler, a German politician and general secretary of the German section of Amnesty International during the '80s.

In 1983, Erler went to Bangladesh with the purpose of verifying the development of projects funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)<sup>104</sup>.

Based on this experience, Erler published in 1985 "Deadly Aid" a furious criticism of development aid that she found useless if not deleterious. According to her position, the positive effects of international co-operation were far less than the negative effects which emerged mainly through agreements between local governments and Western subjects, enhancing corruption and not bringing real benefits to populations. Thus, she asserts that international development is doing nothing but disaster wherever it wants to help. She calls for development aid to be completely terminated.

Erler's position created a big debate in Germany and it was widely criticized both by the political and the humanitarian world. She was accused of lack of vision because she was looking for immediate and short-term effects, forgetting that development paths take a lot of time and patience to be effective.

The importance of Erler's book is undeniable, it contributed to the debate and led it to a wider political and social level, but more than 30 years after its publication we can say some of the criticisms to "Deadly Aid" were right.

A clear example is Erler's criticism of the expansion of the Bangladesh road system, particularly in the Tangail district.

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<sup>103</sup> Brigitte Erler, 1987, *L'aide qui tue. Récit de ma dernière mission d'aide au développement*, Editions d'en bas, Lausanne

<sup>104</sup> The Erler's experience in Bangladesh was only three weeks. it is one of the reasons why her vision was much criticized, it is impossible to know the context of a country in such a short time.

It was considered necessary by the BMZ to facilitate transport from rural areas in particular to growers so as to allow them to trade more easily their products. Erler hardly commented that these expansions not only led to deforestation but were largely useless since only westerners and government officials could be allowed to move in the car. Tangail is today one of the trafficked districts in Bangladesh, and the local economy has surely benefited from road amplitudes<sup>105</sup>.

The most heard testimony from inside the world of humanitarian aid, and perhaps most important, come to us by Micheal Maren, an American journalist and writer with a past as a volunteer in the Peace Corps. During his twenty-year experience in the world of humanitarian aid, particularly in eastern Africa, Maren has faced a great deal of problems, frustrations and wasted efforts. All of these experiences have been summed up by Maren in "The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid International Charity"<sup>106</sup> a sharp and disillusioned critic of the world of humanitarian aid in eastern Africa.

Maren denounced how the Ethiopian and Somali humanitarian crises of the '80s and '90s had allowed to local political and military elites to enrich themselves and to increase their power with the approval of Western entities, particularly Americans. Maren argues that the main goal of NGOs is to find more funding and funds without curing that much of these funds end up financing local elites rather than the population.

In a "road to hell" an extremely negative picture of the cooperators themselves is also drawn: most volunteers of the peace corps are described as people who are not interested in helping or assisting, but rather as indecisive, in crisis, fleeing from problems of "real life" or simply attracted by an "adventurous" experience<sup>107</sup>.

Maren stresses how often he was aware that the presence of Western co-workers did not offer any particular positive impact on local populations, but was still required in order to obtain further funding.

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<sup>105</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/countries/bangladesh/36822405.pdf>

<sup>106</sup> Michael Maren, 1997, *The road to Hell: the Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid International Charity*, Free Press, New York.

<sup>107</sup> Michael Maren, *The road to Hell*, pp. 3-4.

It came to be a vicious circle that saw: a) volunteers participate in humanitarian missions for personal reasons, b) local people welcome volunteers even when they are unhelpful to the practical act because they are aware that they would bring funding and c) political and military elites to foster and stimulate this exchange to seize large percentages of these funds.

About this procedure Maren gives a direct testimony by recounting his experience in Kenya: his job was to evaluate and follow the humanitarian projects funded by the Peace Corps, he had therefore to decide on the suitability of a proposed project, reveal its problems, the advantages, the risks, and if it was approved, oversee the maintenance of the project.

In practice, however, he argues that the only thing he was asked was to approve all the submitted projects, so as consequently the most approved project involved more funding in the country's favor and, above all, more money hijacked by local elites and from NGOs themselves.

“Aid distribution is just another big, private business that relies on government contracts. Groups like CRS<sup>108</sup> are paid by the U.S. government to give away surplus food produced by subsidized U.S. farmers. The more food CRS gave away, the more money they received from the government to administer the handouts. Since the securing of grant money is the primary goal, aid organizations rarely meet a development project they do not like.<sup>109</sup>”

Maren's critical analysis is not just about the situation in Kenya: in the early 1980s he is in Somalia, a country upset by war and famine. In 1977, the expansion plans of Siad Barre, Somali President, led to a bloody conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia called the War of the Ogaden<sup>110</sup>. The conflict, won by Ethiopia, was short but devastating for Somalia and provided a large number of refugees, both Somalis and Ethiopians, in need of humanitarian assistance to survive.

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<sup>108</sup> Catholic Relief Services is an American humanitarian aid organization operating mainly in Africa

<sup>109</sup> Michael Maren, *The road to Hell*, pp. 8-10

<sup>110</sup> War of the Ogaden, 1977-1978, conflict arises for the Somali desire to acquire the Ethiopian region of Ogaden. Ethiopia was saved by Cuban and Soviet aid. The conflict had between 15,000 and 20,000 victims.

A few years after the end of the war Ethiopia was struck by a devastating famine that mobilized a great deal of international aid in a short time; Maren sarcastically calls it "massive and telegenic famines<sup>111</sup>", this crisis was exploited for advertising purposes in the West ("mobilizing rock" N 'roll stars ") but also in Ethiopia where the government exploited it to eliminate internal ethnic issues.

Regardless of the motivations the immense relief plan worked out quite well, bringing clear improvements in the living conditions of Ethiopian populations affected by famine. The echo of this success came to the refugees who had been allocated for years in Somalia, who learned that just beyond the borders the humanitarian aid had been better organized and distributed.

Thus, the will of the refugees was to move to Ethiopia but this purpose was made very difficult by the Somali government, Siad Barre refused return plans as before had refused the settlement projects. In other words, the Somali government did not want to lose the refugees and at the same time did not want them to lose the status of refugees. As explained by Maren:

“Either option would have meant an end to their refugee status in the eyes of the UN and therefore an end to the more than 80 million of dollars in annual refugee aid. [...] There are strong political and economic reasons why Somalia wants the refugees to remain refugees. [...] refugee aid has become so big a source of foreign exchange that it has become an important component of the Somali gross national product.<sup>112</sup>”

Maren's vision of international development cooperation is a desolating portrait.

He is extremely critical but also extremely sad to note that the primary purpose of helping populations in difficulty is lost, it is completely obscured by a set of personal interests, second-rate and corruption which affect everyone at every level; western governments, local governments, NGO structures and individual volunteers, according to Maren's view, all are responsible for the failure of the humanitarian machine.

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<sup>111</sup> Michael Maren, *The road to Hell*, pp. 203

<sup>112</sup> Michael Maren, *The road to Hell*, pp. 284

Maren's accusations are courageous and they have certainly contributed to raising public awareness of major issues such as Somali government crimes and corruption inside the NGOs. However, Maren's views are based on personal experience, on field knowledge and on events seen with his eyes. He does not conduct statistical research and he does not compare with reality that he does not know personally.

He can only speak about the geographical context of East Africa and in relation to some major governmental NGOs (in particular the Peace Corps and USAID). He can not and he does not do references to other geographic areas or to other humanitarian realities such as, for example, the many small western NGOs or local associations.

However Maren's final positions are less extreme than Brigitte Erler's ones, he does not wish the total and immediate closure of humanitarian aid, but instead he denounces a long list of contradictions and serious problems which are limiting the effectiveness of aid. As Maren points out, the amount of funding is not important, but how these funds are concretely used.

### **6.3 The Political-Economic Debate**

Since the 2000s, the international aid debate has shifted to academic and economic levels. One of the most important views is the liberal one based on a critique linked to the idea that large inflows of aid promote dependence rather than autonomy. One of the most prominent figures was Peter T. Bauer, an English economist, who was a conservative, member of the Tories and icon of liberal thought. He was the author of numerous studies concerning development, and he was always extremely critical of the idea that development aid was a suitable method to allow poor countries to begin a development process.

Bauer maintained that development aid would prolong poverty instead of reducing it as well as any form of central planning or pricing control. He strongly denied the idea that poverty was self-defeating, but rather he argued that the continuous inflow of money from outside made the local people passive and humiliated by not helping at all internal

development. Bauer was one of the first to demand confidence that developing populations could build their own path without external interference.

“Development aid is this clearly not necessary to rescue poor societies from a vicious circle of poverty. Indeed, it is far more likely to keep them in that state. It promotes dependence on others. It encourages the idea that emergence from poverty depends on external donations rather than on people’s own efforts, motivation, arrangements and institutions.”<sup>113</sup>

Thus, Peter Bauer's analysis confirms Maner's experiences: humanitarian aid is likely to create a vicious circle where poverty becomes a justification for aid that in turn creates a relationship of dependence, leaving the recipients in poverty.

Bauer's positions opened the way to a vast liberal current of criticisms of development aid, and many authors shared and enlarged the British economist's point of view. The most influential media author is Dambisa Moyo, an internationally renowned Zambian economist who published in 2009 "Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is Another Way for Africa" which soon became an international editorial case.

Dambisa Moyo graduated in the United States and worked for years in institutions such as the World Bank and Goldman Sachs, thus the bases of her criticism of the aid system are strictly economical; unlike many other authors, she proposes alternatives to incentivize African development without resorting to international aid.

Moyo's ideas are based on the fact that in recent decades the situation in Africa has not improved but has even worsened. Despite the huge investments made to improve African economic development, the situation would, except for few cases, be significantly worse. Per capita income is around \$ 1 a day in Sub-Saharan Africa<sup>114</sup>, It is lower than during the 70's; between 1981 and 2002 Africans in extreme poverty were almost doubled, with a clear contraction compared to the percentage of poverty in proportion to the population in the rest of the world.

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<sup>113</sup> Peter T. Bauer, *From Subsistence to Exchange*. Princeton University Press. 2004. Pp 134

<sup>114</sup> Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010 pp. 30

Along with the ineffective economic development also an improvement in lifestyle is absent, Africa remains the only continent in which life expectancy is below sixty years and in some cases it is around thirty.

The failure of African economic development is largely due to Western interference and international aid, especially those aimed at solving emergency or short-term problems. Dambisa Moyo illustrates what she calls the "micro-macro paradox<sup>115</sup>": short-term interventions that do not bring tangible benefits over the medium-long term and which, in fact, risk unintentionally to destabilize the existing economic and development forms.

The ephemeral positive outcomes of short-term projects lead to erroneous assessment of the effectiveness of dealing with prospective issues. The aid results are then erroneously assessed on individual outcomes and not on the ability to solve problems permanently and durable. Thus, from this point of view, the aid system in Africa is completely inadequate as the author sums up:

"The notion that aid can alleviate systemic poverty, and has done so, is a myth. Millions in Africa are poorer today because of aid; misery and poverty have not ended but increased. Aid has been, and continues to be, an unmitigated political, economic, and humanitarian disaster for most parts of the developing world.<sup>116</sup>"

The structural weakness of short-term aid is particularly true in the agricultural-food sector, it is a well-established practice to invade foreign markets with Western food in order to respond quickly to the local food demand. However the massive import of foreign food damages the development of local farming economies.

In order to solve this problem, the US government has sought to change strategy: since 2005, a quarter of the funding for the Food for Peace program is used to acquire food produced in poor countries and then redistributed within the countries themselves<sup>117</sup>. In

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<sup>115</sup> Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid*, pp. 83

<sup>116</sup> Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid*, pp. 23

<sup>117</sup> Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid*, pp. 45



this way they try to give a boost to food production and funds are circulated within the local economy.

Programs such as the new Food for Peace are the key for starting a reasoned and efficient development aid, which provides for an ever-lowering external economic participation order to strengthen the internal economic relationships in poor countries, in other words strengthening the fragile local economies to lay the foundations for autonomous economic development.

In a clear contrast to liberal criticism, we find authors such as James Petra and Henry Veltmeyer which can be framed in a current of thought that we can define as a socialist one. Even in this case, the authors criticize development aid in poor countries, but not because it is unsuccessful or inefficient, but rather because the aid is part of a new colonialism by Western powers.

After the end of the Cold War, East-West dualism went to crisis as well as the various state sovereignty of the satellite countries. In this context, the large NGOs theorized their right to intervene anywhere in the world in defense of human rights and without being subject to state sovereignty in those years took place the emergence of a humanitarian subjectivity: weak states hosting large NGOs or foreign agencies, which become, to all effects, political subjects that can influence the country's internal administration.

For authors such as Petras and Veltmeyer this foreign intrusion is nothing but a way of Western powers to weaken the sovereignty of poor countries and shape their social and economic policies.

The end is a globalized liberal market based on a democratic political system. Thus, from a political point of view, the authors are aware that often the forms of government of the poor countries are only partially democratic and sometimes dictatorial but they do not consider this to be an adequate element for not respecting the sovereignty of a country, especially to subordinate it to a form of foreign economic control.

They also point out that the need for a link between liberalist forms and democratic politics is a relatively new conception: for years, authoritarian regimes around the world have been

backed by western governments since they were considered more suitable for the establishment of economic forms of free trade.

The establishment of liberal democracy as a fundamental precondition for a liberal market is a "new" ideology that has led Western governments and international institutions to clash against the previously-held authoritarian regimes<sup>118</sup>. Liberal Democracies are now a form of government "imposed" from outside and have become a necessary condition for access to financial aid. Part of this "form of control" is the same NGOs that export and impose, voluntarily or not, social and cultural structures aimed at fostering the integration of a liberal market:

"The NGOs in this context were recruited not only to mediate between the aid donors and the poor communities but to carry into the localities and communities of the poor the gospel of capitalism and democracy, the virtues of private enterprise and reform."<sup>119</sup>

Claudio Bazzocchi's theories are similar, the Italian professor argues that following the end of the Cold War Western governments undertook a process of structural adjustment of poor countries.

Former Soviet satellite countries or so-called "Third World" countries were no longer considered sovereign states but social bodies to incorporate and reform<sup>120</sup>. The structural problems and the instability of these countries are simplified as a result of poor management and weak institutions, solving problems with the application of a free market and democratic systems.

Poverty is interpreted as inability, or impossibility, to access the global market and its benefits, so a change of behavior is necessary to align itself with Western mentality. According to Bazzocchi, this depoliticization of poverty is a way to "hide" the many structural problems of poor countries: they cease to consider fiscal policies, social relations, possible conditions of internal and external exploitation.

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<sup>118</sup> James Petras, Henry Veltmeyer, *Globalization Unmasked: Imperialism in the 21st Century*, Zed Books, 2001 pp. 33

<sup>119</sup> <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/inter/v9n2/a10v9n2.pdf> pp. 236

<sup>120</sup> Claudio Bazzocchi, *La balcanizzazione dello sviluppo, Il ponte*, 2004, pp. 30

The exports of political and market values can not be achieved by force or violence, not least in the long run, for this reason Western governments have created a new form of colonization: humanitarian aid. Bazzocchi reflects on how the international cooperation system is responsible for exporting certain values (human rights, civil society, gender equality, etc.).

In this way, NGOs become complicit in Western export model plans, they help deny the structural causes of poverty and contribute to a system of economic exploitation of anti-statism<sup>121</sup>.

Majid Rahnema's thought, Iranian minister and one of the greatest scholars of poverty, proposed a distinction between the so-called vernacular poverty linked to the livelihood economy and modern poverty<sup>122</sup>.

Before the process of economic globalization in many contexts of the outh of the world there were very limited goods and very sober consumption, but they were enough to allow to individuals a certain amount of subsistence, also thanks to the social community relations which could help individuals in distress.

Subsequently with the introduction, sometimes forced, of these communities in market economies it becomes necessary for individuals to buy everything they need, modern poverty is created: urbanization phenomena and income needs prevent the local livelihoods and create dependence on the market.

The World Bank classifies under the extreme poverty line all individuals with an income less than \$ 1.90 per day<sup>123</sup>, this is a reasonably applicable reasoning in a market system but in a context of exchange or livelihood becomes an ambiguous parameter. Since the beginning of development aid, the problem of poverty has been tackled by using implicit reasoning to increase income to overcome poverty: according to Rahnema this was a loud mistake that included whole populations in an economic system for which they were not ready.

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<sup>121</sup> Claudio Bazzocchi, *La balcanizzazione dello sviluppo*, Il ponte, 2004, pp. 20

<sup>122</sup> Mahijd Rahnema, *Quando la povertà diventa miseria*, Einaudi 2005 pp. 289-290

<sup>123</sup> <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/746163-what-is-the-1-90-poverty-line-and-based-on-this>

The introduction of income and markets and the abolition of informal economies has turned a huge number of self-sufficient poor people into individuals on paper slightly less poor but unable to provide for their livelihood.

This kind of help incarnates the logic of an economy that not only leaves all human beings dependent on external aid which are often harmful and outside control, but also destroys the great social and human equilibriums that the vernacular lifestyle of the poor had been able to create to help them meet their needs.

Amartya Sen is an important Indian economist and philosopher, Nobel Prize in Economics in 1998, since the early 90's he has undertaken extensive studies on the relationship between ethics and economics in developing countries. He has a liberal academic formation but since the beginning of his career he has shown strong focus on social issues and democratic processes.

Thus, the vision proposed by Sen in the course of the years is a vision that could perhaps be called "social-democratic", a point of view that is inspired by both liberal and socialist reflections to propose a sort of synthesis between the two theories. His economic and political theories are not developed a priori but they are developed following his experience as a famine scholar in countries such as India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Amartya Sen analyzes how food crises are more and more rarely linked to geographical or climatic issues, but how they are primarily a problem of control and resource utilization. Lack of food is due to a lack of distribution of goods, a lack of money and the inability to access the markets, so they are fundamentally problematic in public policies<sup>124</sup>.

It is wrong, according to the author, the belief that it should be taught to populations in difficulty how to cultivate, trade or produce certain goods; it is wrong to think that these populations are not able to grow food or to feed themselves<sup>125</sup>.

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<sup>124</sup> Amartya Sen, *Poverty And Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford University Press, 1990

<sup>125</sup> Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, OUP Oxford, 2001, pp. 165-166

Thus, even if there are resources the difficulties arise in relation to the conditions of trade, economy and local policies that do not allow everyone to access these resources in an equal manner. This is the key element of the food crisis according to Sen, the false conviction that millions of people are starving because of the lack of food. He brings the example of his native country, India, where it happens that in some places populations are starving, while a few miles away, large quantities of food are produced and accumulated.

However, food that is destined not for local people's self-sufficiency but it is produced to be included in global economic circuits; sometimes it is destined to the same western countries from which local people receive food in the form of humanitarian aid.

In such cases, sending food can turn in a disaster, because if in the context of food crisis they intervene by entering food aid the risk is to further destabilize an already fragile market. In a system where manufacturers are in a difficult position the import of cheap or free goods can temporarily feed people, but it also destroys the local economy.

One of the best known examples of this contradiction is the case in Haiti: the Caribbean island has been receiving substantial food aid over the years that not only did not solve the problem of food ineffectiveness, but rather they have greatly reduced production in favor of an increasing amount of imports, making Haiti dependent on foreign aid<sup>126</sup>.

Therefore, the priority to resolve food crises is to support local incomes by putting the foundations of the local economy into motion.

To do this, it is necessary to stop considering the total food supply of a country but the chances of each individual person to obtain the possession and control of a certain number of goods<sup>127</sup>.

Hunger is not due to food scarcity but when the individual no longer has the right to adequate food.

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<sup>126</sup> <http://dailysignal.com/2015/12/18/the-negative-effects-on-haiti-of-too-much-foreign-aid/>

<sup>127</sup> Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* pp. 180-181

The connection between the economy and the food crisis is even more obvious if one considers that the majority of humans get the right to food by working in foreign contexts to food production.

As in Western countries, even in developing countries, those who directly produce food are now a minority, in a complex economic context, they create very important interdependencies that are sometimes not considered in the world of development aid. The inability to get food in countries like India or Brazil is the ultimate impact of crises that have hit other sectors of the national economy by denying the affected classes the possibility of continuing to buy the necessary food.

#### **6.4 The Social Impact of Aid**

Some authors, especially journalists and academic researchers, have produced interesting works of social analysis. Their works do not analyze the individual great economic effects as the implicit consequences of the experience of international cooperation.

Anne-Cécile Robert, a French journalist and writer, tries to question how many things the Western world has extracted from Africa without recognizing it. She thinks not so much in terms of economic resources or raw materials as in terms of cultural stimuli, social relationships and historical dynamics.

The Western world should lose the paternalistic sense of superiority towards Africa; developed countries should be less concerned with deciding what Africa needs to do, instead they should develop a form of gratitude for everything they owe to Africa in terms of immigration, exploitation and cultural imposition.

Africa undergoes a constant process of infantilization<sup>128</sup>, a structural failure to express and rediscover itself. Humanitarian assistance is an integral part of this process: it is the expression of need for "superior" help to obtain the relief that otherwise Africa would be incapable of achieving on its own. In this context, the political leaders of the African countries are more keen on the consensus of international countries than their own people welfare, increasing the growing lack of cohesion of African realities.

This "stagnant" situation is attributable to Africa itself and its leaders who have never been able to address a talk about Africa "for itself" and to propose effective plans. On the other hand, the West is closed into another type of trap: a messianic trap that allows Western countries to cloak with a cynical philanthropic and ethical patrol the constant pursuit of their own interests<sup>129</sup>.

The West lives in the more or less conscious conviction of being economically and culturally omnipotent and, with this conviction, has played the role of exporter of justice, happiness and well-being. Equal dialogue between Africa and the West will never be possible until the conviction of superiority and forms of infantilization will be abandoned in favor of mutual recognition of their contributions and mistakes.

The emergence of a complex humanitarian industry has led to the emergence of numerous organizations (NGOs, foundations, agencies, associations, etc.) who have large budgets that imply irretrievably problems in managing money.

Umberto Gori, an Italian professor, studies the relationship between humanitarian aid and political corruption and support for war. In particular, Gori conducts field research in the Balkan countries of the former Yugoslavia and demonstrates the influx of development finance to strengthen local crime by creating a very profound and very problematic link between aid and organized crime. Western aid organizations do not look closely at the symbiotic relations in Balkan countries between organized crime and political power.

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<sup>128</sup> Anne-Cécile Robert, 2006, *L'Africa in soccorso dell'Occidente*, Emi, 2006, pp. 68

<sup>129</sup> Anne-Cécile Robert, 2006, *L'Africa in soccorso dell'Occidente*, Emi, 2006, pp. 75

Co-operation policies constantly promote projects aimed at economic development but, as Gori asserts with confidence, most of the funding ends up with local governors and their families by feeding a sort of mafia. It is common practice that relatives and friends of political elites create beneficial associations in order to obtain international funds. In Albania, many NGOs are directly linked to a political-criminal clan and they are able to get funding thanks to the help of Italian NGOs<sup>130</sup>.

So, there are real "mafia states"<sup>131</sup> characterized by a strong bond between the political and the criminal world both being financed by foreign aid. In this way, cooperation policies in the Balkans are not only largely ineffective for the foreseen purposes but they are actively contributing to increasing the instability and the difficulties of the assisted countries.

The implications of humanitarian aid can in some cases arrive to absurd and grotesque extremes. An example of this is the experience of the dutch journalist Linda Polman who in 2001 interviewed Mike Lamin, leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF<sup>132</sup>) in Sierra Leone. During the interview, Lamin explains how the exponential increase in violence by the RUF, and consequently by the government, was a deliberate strategy to force Western countries to intervene.

With terrible clarity, the revolutionary leader claims the merit of peace in progress: if they had not begun to mutilate thousands of young people by stirring up the indignation of international public opinion, humanitarian aid would never come and the United Nations would never intervene by imposing peace. Mike Lamin is sure: "Without the amputation factor you would not have come"<sup>133</sup>.

Therefore he believes that he has worked for the good of his own country and acting in the only possible way to obtain the attention of the Western world with actions of great media

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<sup>130</sup> Umberto Gori, *La cooperazione allo sviluppo. Errori e illusioni di un mito*, Franco Angeli, 2003 pp. 92

<sup>131</sup> Umberto Gori, *La cooperazione allo sviluppo*. pp. 69

<sup>132</sup> the Revolutionary United Front was a paramilitary organization active from 1991 to 2002 in Sierra Leone. It fought a bloody civil war against the government in office of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. The RUF had no definite political or religious ideology and it is known to the public opinion for the cruelty to civilians.

<sup>133</sup> Linda Polman, *War Games: The Story of Aid and War in Modern Times*, Viking 2011 pp. 150



and emotional impact. Lamin bitterly denounced the merit of peace being denied to his group, as the RUF was denigrated only for amputations, rather than praised for saving the country through all these amputations.

Linda Polman puts the glaring RUF madness into the logic of the modern humanitarian era: it is increasingly evident that humanitarian aid is strictly proportional to violence and devastation, the more violence is brutal, the more humanitarian aid they will get <sup>134</sup>.

The amputation of their countrymen by RUF can be considered an extreme example of what is called "soft power". The term soft power was coined by Joseph Nye and developed by Mark Duffield<sup>135</sup>. It is a form of self-actualising power in which developing countries members, beneficiaries of humanitarian aid, and those who wish to benefit from it, set their own behaviors and lines of action in relation to the desired relationship with Western countries.

The advantages and benefits of international cooperation create a strong attraction and desire in needy people who are pushed to act accordingly. The RUF case is an extreme, more "trivial" are the cases where individuals and communities change their social structures or economic settings by promoting liberal principles and collaboration by anticipating the will of developed countries. Soft power offers to the excluded people the possibility of "being free" through the inclusion in the Western world.

Mark Duffield believes that the bond created through this form of power is a new form of imperialism<sup>136</sup>. A form of imperialism based on volunteering and which has the task of bringing order and organizing the new cosmopolitan world.

It is a cooperative imperialism that provides for the opportunity for poor countries to join the "respectable" group of countries and to gain access to the many benefits of international aid, but just in return for the acceptance of the rules imposed and the conversion to liberal political and economic norms.

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<sup>134</sup> Linda Polman, *War Games: The Story of Aid and War in Modern Times*, Viking 2011 pp. 150

<sup>135</sup> Mark Duffield, *Guerre postmoderne. L'aiuto umanitario come tecnica politica di controllo*, Il Ponte, 2004 pp. 172

<sup>136</sup> Mark Duffield, *Guerre postmoderne*. pp. 177

## 6.5 Considerations from The South of The World

The impact and the contradictions of international cooperation have created a wide-ranging debate, a mosaic of views that address different aspects of the issue: economic rather than political, social and cultural. The vast majority of studies are carried out and divulged by Western researchers, yet another contradiction, even scholars from the poor countries (Amartya Sen, Dambisa Moyo) are academically and professionally formed in western countries.

In recent years the debate has been expanding, with the inclusion of the intellectuals from the "South of the world", they found to be particularly useful in knowing the views of countries and populations directly affected by international co-operation. So these studies can be interpreted as a kind of self-assessment, as a reflection on the internal dynamics of poor countries and how they can be influenced by external factors.

Arundhati Roy, an Indian writer, presents some harsh but shrewd reflections on the role of NGOs in developing countries. The author describes associations as tools used to contain popular frustration; through humanitarian aid they grant those goods and benefits that populations should receive rightfully. NGOs fill the gaps of power and organization and assume the duties of the state with the approval of governments and the passive acceptance of populations which are transformed into addicted people and gradually lose power and political consciousness. NGOs pose as mediators, as neutral technicians between political elites and poor classes, between "the empire and its subjects"<sup>137</sup>.

The problem that is often lost is that NGOs and all international bodies have no duty to the people they work with and to people they help, they have to account to their donors rather than to beneficiaries of the aid and when NGO's want to change their plans and their goals, they have all the right to do so, but when they leave a country or a region they take away all the benefits and advantages leaving the population in a state of dependence and necessity.

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<sup>137</sup> Arundhati Roy, *The Hanging of Afzal Guru and the Strange Case of the Attack on the Indian Parliament*, Penguin 2013 pp. 105

There is therefore a vicious cycle of aid that, by creating dependency, will further aid in the future, without the local governments actually doing something to change this trend. According to Arundhati Roy, the repetition of these cycles reinforces the Western conception of the people of poor countries as they are eternally in need of help<sup>138</sup>. Poor countries, devastated by war or hunger are so no longer considered as the unfortunate epilogue of political choices but as pathological victims; they are just unlucky populations destined to be eternally poor and who will always need the help of the “white man” to survive.

This vision of things is due to a set of factors including the inefficiency of local governments, the state of passive dependence on populations and the image that NGOs present in these countries, an apolitical, neutral picture that presents poverty as a fact without explaining its causes, a poverty that can only be tackled through aid but can not be overcome through radical changes.

Inevitably, this "fatality" of the destiny of poor countries unable to change, increases the negative stereotypes and prejudices against foreign populations. The fact that the only possible help comes from the "lay missionaries of the modern world", actually raises in the developed countries the racism towards poor populations.

Another appeal to the need of poor countries to initiate a self-empowerment process comes from Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan activist and Nobel Peace Prize in 2004.

Wangari Maathai points out that dependence on aid is now an intrinsic factor in the mentality of many African governments and citizens; many communities have stopped working to build their future by themselves, leaving management in the hands of donors, which are now seen as "so many Christmas fathers who bring gifts, money, materials, and other contributions."<sup>139</sup>

Therefore, even when donor proposals are not particularly interesting or coherent, they will always be welcomed with enthusiasm and participation by communities; they know that

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<sup>138</sup> Arundhati Roy, *The Hanging of Afzal Guru* pp. 120

<sup>139</sup> Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa*, Anchor, 2010, pp. 83

every extra benefit is something gained and that if a project does not work there will be another proposed in the future. The steady contribution of aid has provoked to an internal process of deresponsibilisation for Africans who do not feel responsible for costs, material, project maintenance and any other commitment that is entirely on the donor's shoulders.

Thus, a process which creates a stagnant waiting situation that can become dramatic when, for any reason, there is a lack of aid to communities that are now completely uninhabited to run alone.

Communities "abandoned" by aid, have great difficulty in surviving, because the concept of poverty has changed with the introduction of the system of cooperation and the inclusion of communities in this system.

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# Glossary

<b>ALNAP</b>	Active Learning Network for Accountability
<b>BMZ</b>	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
<b>CDD</b>	Community-Driven Development
<b>CPA</b>	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
<b>CRS</b>	Catholic Relief Services
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EDF</b>	European Development Fund
<b>ERP</b>	European Recovery Program
<b>ESAF</b>	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
<b>FAR</b>	Rwanda Armed Forces
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GNI</b>	Gross National Income
<b>HCS</b>	Hararghe Catholic Secretariat
<b>HIPC</b>	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
<b>IBRD</b>	International Bank for Reconstruction And Development
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>LDC</b>	Least Development Countries



<b>LMIC</b>	Lower Middle Income Countries
<b>MDG</b>	Millenium Development Goals
<b>MSF</b>	Medecins Sans Frontières
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OA</b>	Official Assistance
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation For Economic Co-Operation And Development
<b>OEEC</b>	Organization for European Economic Cooperation
<b>PRGF</b>	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
<b>PRSP</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
<b>RPF</b>	Rwandan Patriotic Front
<b>RUF</b>	Revolutionary United Front
<b>SAP</b>	Structural Adjustment Program
<b>SCI</b>	Service Civil International
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nation Conference On Trade And Development
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Program
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nation Development Program
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
<b>URD</b>	Urgence Réhabilitation Développement
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WB</b>	World Bank